Singing Foreign Songs in the Lord's House: An Examination of the Worship Music Sung in Songhai/Zarma Protestant Churches of the West African Sahel, with Special Reference to Niger

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ABSTRACT

Music is a key marker of a person's identity. It is commonly assumed that people identify most strongly with the music of their own culture and upbringing. The Songhai people of West Africa have a rich historical and musical heritage. Songhai Christians, however, rarely make use of their musical traditions, relying mostly on borrowed forms of worship music. This qualitative study uses insights and methods from ethnomusicology and liturgical study to examine why Songhai Christians ignore or neglect their musical traditions in worship. Using data elicited from eighty semi-structured interviews and lessons on the three-stringed lute, the thesis presents a comprehensive synopsis of Songhai traditional music, including ideas about music, genres/occasions for music, musical instruments, musicians, and dance. With this information as a basis for comparison, the thesis proceeds to examine Protestant Songhai music using information obtained during observations of twenty-three churches and case studies of three of those churches. The analysis of the data shows a significant confusion or loss of identity amongst Songhai Christians under the powerful impact of five cultural and historical forces: tradition, Islam, the Christian subculture, the West/globalization, and the political nation/state. Music plays a role in each of these subcultures and helps shape people's choices and identities. Additionally, each subculture is undergoing rapid change, causing further destabilization of believers' identities as individuals and as a church. Using grid/group cultural theory as a frame for analysis, the thesis proposes a new model for investigating the mix of cultural and historical causes which affect worship music in the Songhai church. It further presents a 'logophonic' principle of soundly ordered words and words soundly ordered which the church could use to build on current worship practices and construct a more robust Songhai Christian identity.

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DECLARATIONS

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed John R. DeValve (Candidate)

Date 05 October 2017

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed John R. DeValve (Candidate)

Date 05 October 2017

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-Library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Theses Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

Signed John R. DeValve (Candidate)

Date 05 October 2017

DEDICATION

To my dad, Robert Henry DeValve (1930-2010). When I saw how you struggled with your own PhD, I resolved not to attempt such a feat. Thankfully, time and circumstances have changed my perspective. You did not get to see me begin this project, but you knew about it and gave your approval to it from afar. Together with mom, you authorized the first seed money to fund this degree program. I will be eternally grateful for the way you raised me to think and question, giving me the tools to gain wisdom and understanding. Thank you for preparing the ground for me to accomplish such a huge task.

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Of equal importance to me in this climb to the PhD summit was my research assistant, Abdias Alassane. Fluent in Zarma, French, and English, this rare and very talented young man is in great demand in Niger, and I deeply appreciate the many hours he consecrated to the task and the time he spent walking with me on this steep path. He transcribed interviews, checked the transcription of most of the interviews in Songhai with me, translated all quotes from primary sources into English, and helped me perform case studies. Not only that, he introduced me to people in his parent's home town of Damana so I could conduct eight interviews there in December 2013. His advice and insight were invaluable. I would have been severely handicapped on the ascent without his help. I wish him all the best for the future.

My family have been big fans of this project from the beginning. My mom, 92 years young in 2017, has been one of my biggest cheerleaders and has prayed and encouraged me along the way. My children, Dan and Suzanne, were already grown and making their own way in the world when I started this research, but their love for Niger

and their interest in this project have never waned. Thanks for asking good questions and answering my questions about your childhood in Téra.

Many people along the way have given me advice, direction, and help on this climb. They include my SIM colleagues Ben Hegeman, Gary Corwin, and Howard Brant, who gave me timely advice on the formation of a research topic and the steps in the research process. Special thanks also go to Warren Larson and Thomas Hale, who also helped me in the initial stages of the research climb, Warren with some ideas about my research topic, and Tom with some pertinent advice and helpful comments about my proposal and the research process in Niger. I also wish to thank the former director of the *Centre de Formation et de Promotion Musicale* (Centre for Musical Training and Promotion: CFPM) in Niamey (Moussa Garba), the leader of the band Mamar Kassey (Yacouba Moumouni), Hamza Fousseini (who helped me check some Songhai transcriptions when Abdias was too busy), and Martial Pené (who assisted me with one focus group interview). My *moolo* teacher, Ousseini Halidou, has given me valuable insider perspectives on Songhai music and has patiently persevered in helping me nail those 'easy' musical motifs that I struggled with. The *Institut de Recherches en Sciences Humaines* (Institute for Research in the Human Sciences – IRSH) at the University of Niamey was a big help in finding resources in both French and English which were difficult to find elsewhere. I spent many fruitful hours reading in the IRSH library.

There are several individuals who lent their time and skills to help read through chapter drafts and check spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Thank you Scott Eberle, Don Hall, Natalie Wilkins, and Nancy DeValve for being my readers and helping me spot ideas that were awkwardly phrased and opinions that were biased. In addition, Beka Rideout and her children helped cut up coded interview portions and paste them onto cards. Beki Helwig further helped me with some formatting issues when I began to pull all the chapters together into one document. Special thanks go to Nancy DeValve

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A big shout out is also due to Adrian Chatfield and Roberta King, my supervisors in this research, and to Tom Harvey, my house tutor at OCMS. They provided much helpful advice and encouragement when I was about to give up or needed a bit of advice and direction. More than once, Tom had to console me when I practically dissolved into a puddle in his office. Adrian and Roberta have been terrific mentors and cheerleaders. I have learned much from them.

No list of thanks would be complete without the mention of the Songhai people themselves. Over the 28 years I have worked with them, they have shown their hospitality and love despite poverty and loss. They have freely given of themselves to help me in this project. To the churches that participated in this study, thank you for your time and willingness to let me barge in and shake things up. You have taught me much, and I have experienced the welcome and deference that you so readily give to strangers. I also wish to thank Pastor Abel and his wife, Tila, for hosting me several

times when I made overnight trips to Téra. Finally, to all my research participants, I say a heartfelt thanks. You sacrificed of yourselves to teach me about your lives and your culture. May you be blessed, and may this research be something that will return the blessing you have given to me many times over.

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SONGHAI PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

aa, ee, ii, oo, uu Double vowels are long whereas single vowels are short.

ã A nasalized vowel like the ‘a’ in ‘wander’. In Songhai, this sound occurs only after an ‘h’.

ɓ Voiced bilabial stop with ingressive mouth air. Often called an implosive ‘b’. There is no English equivalent to this sound. Used in the Hausa language and not in Songhai.

c Pronounced like the ‘ch’ in child.

ẽ A nasalized vowel like the ‘a’ in ‘bane’. In Songhai, this sound occurs only after an ‘h’.

ĩ A nasalized vowel like the ‘ee’ in ‘seen’. In Songhai, this sound occurs only after an ‘h’.

õ A nasalized vowel like the ‘o’ in ‘hone’. In Songhai, this sound occurs only after an ‘h’.

ŋ Voiced velar nasal with egressive mouth air. Like the ‘ng’ in ‘sing’. Unlike English, this phoneme may occur at the beginning of a word in Songhai. It is to be distinguished from the phoneme ‘ng’, in which the hard ‘g’ is pronounced.

ny Like the Spanish ‘ñ’, this phoneme often occurs at the beginning of a word in Songhai.

r Voiced alveolar flap with egressive mouth air. This is sometimes called a ‘flap r’. It is like the way many Americans pronounce the ‘tt’ in ‘butter’.

GLOSSARY

Adoration – One of the French words that is a rough equivalent for the English word 'worship'. The word is often coupled with the term *louange* in the expression *louange et adoration* ('praise and worship'), and indicates two types of music, one fast (*louange*), the other slow (*adoration*).

Almoravids – A group of Arabo-Berbers living in the Western Sahara who conquered the Ghana Empire and gradually spread Islamic influence over a territory from present-day Senegal to Spain in the eleventh century AD.

Askia Muhammad – One of the two great kings of the Songhai Empire. He ruled from 1493 to 1528.

Balafon – Name for a class of wooden xylophones common in West African societies. The *balafon* is not an instrument indigenous to the Songhai.

Bannya (Alternate spelling: *bennye*) – Songhai term for a 'slave', that is, a member of the former slave class amongst the Songhai. The word can also be used as a term of derision.

Baule – A city in France which gave its name to a conference called by the French government in 1990 for all French-speaking countries. The conference aimed to promote liberalization, democracy, and a free press, especially in the former French colonies.

Ɓoori – Hausa name for the possession-trance ceremony which is almost identical to the *fooley foori*. The *ɓoori* and the *fooley* are types of West African traditional religious practices.

Burcin (Alternate spelling: *borcin*) – A noble or free-born person amongst the Songhai.

Deede – Songhai term for a story or epic tale. As a verb, the word means to tell a story.

Dendi – A branch of the Songhai ethnolinguistic family of peoples. The Dendi live on both sides of the Niger/Benin border along the Niger River, and their dialect of Songhai is a trade language in northern Benin. They claim descent from Askia Dawud, one of the Songhai emperors.

Dhikr – A Muslim Sufi ceremony or practice in which the faithful chant the name of God repeatedly. The ceremony is often accompanied by music and dance. The Songhai refer to this ceremony or practice as *zikiri*.

Dondon – The Songhai name for a class of drum common across West Africa. It is an hourglass pressure drum slung under the arm. In Mali, there is a version of this drum called *kolo,* but it is played by women.

Dondonkari **(pl. *dondonkarey*)** – A person who plays the *dondon*. Some dialects use the word *dondonkarko* to designate this person. The suffix *–kar* means 'to strike', and the further suffix *–i* (*-ko*) means 'a person'.

Dongo – The spirit of thunder, lightning, and storm. The most important deity in the Songhai pantheon.

Dòònù – To sing (tone: low-low to distinguish it from millet porridge, which has the same spelling but a low-high tone). Noun form: dòòní (tone: low-high)

Eid-al-Adha – The Muslim Festival of Sacrifice which comes approximately seventy days after the feast of *Eid-al-Fitr*. In Francophone Africa, this festival is known as *Tabaski*. It occurs near the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Eid-al-Fitr – The Muslim festival following the fasting month of Ramadan. This is known simply as 'Ramadan' by most Nigeriens.

Éloge – (French) Praise offered to someone. The word is a close approximation of the word *zamu* in Songhai.

Fooley (Alternate spellings: *folley, follay, hooley*) – Literally 'madness', 'possession', or 'delirium'. A term used to designate either the spirits or the ceremony calling on the spirits to take possession of someone. The latter sense is often rendered using the expression *fooley foori*, which means a spirit dance.

Francophone – A word used to designate a person who habitually uses French or a geographical place where French is a prominent language.

Gaanu – To dance. Noun form: gaani.

Gaasu – A hemispherical gourd used as a bowl or container. The *gaasu* may also be used as a musical instrument when inverted and placed on the ground or in a bowl of water.

Gao – Capital city of the Songhai Empire, located on the east bend of the Niger River in the modern country of Mali

Gooje (Mali: *n'jarka*) **–** A one-stringed bowed lute or fiddle.

Goy – The Songhai word for 'work', it may be a noun or a verb, as in English.

Griot – Generic term used to designate the musician/historian/genealogist in several West African societies. See *jesere*.

Haŋandi (Alternate spelling: *haŋendi*) – Literally 'to water'. A ceremony in which women encourage each other to gain weight, thus becoming more beautiful.

Harakoy – Abbreviated Songhai name for the spirit of the Niger River, one of the main deities of the Songhai pantheon. The full name is *Harakoy Diko*.

Hari – Clear liquid, which may be any of the following, depending on context: water, rain, saliva, sap, or urine.

Hárέy (Alternate spelling: *háráy*) – Term which means 'rhythm', or a generic term for a drum. The tone (high-high) is important, as it distinguishes it from other words.

Jembe – Commonly spelled *djembe* in the academic literature, this is a tapered drum with one head which comes from West Africa. It is not indigenous to the Songhai, but it has been adopted by many Christians across the subcontinent and around the world for use in church worship.

Jesere **(pl. *jeserey*)** (Alternate spellings: *jasare, gesere*) – The Songhai word for the traditional musician/historian/genealogist whose main function is praise-singing or honouring the *burcin*. See griot.

Jiney – A general term for merchandise, stuff, baggage, or material possessions. The word is often paired with other terms to make compound expressions. An example of this is *goy jiney*, which literally means 'work things', 'tools', or 'work utensils'. In the context of music, the phrase could mean 'musical instruments'.

Kar – To strike or hit. When used of musical instruments, it means 'to play'.

Kasa-kasa – Any of a number of rattles made from gourds, small tins or other available elements. The rattling sound comes from stones, sand, or beads inside the instrument or attached to the outside which 'clack' when shaken or struck.

Konka – A tin can or a musical instrument made from a tin can with stones or beads in it.

Kora – Name for the famous West African harp-lute, which may have up to twenty-one strings. It is not indigenous to the Songhai.

Koyraboro senni – Literally, 'the language of the townspeople'. This term is used by northern Songhai to refer to their language. It is especially used by people in Mali.

Kuntiji (Alternate spelling: *kuntigi*) – A small, one-stringed plucked lute.

Louange – The most common word for 'praise' in French, it is used often in the Bible to designate praise offered to God. In Nigerien churches, it is often used in the expression *louange et adoration* ('praise and worship'). See *adoration*.

Louis Segond – The name for the most commonly requested and used French translation of the Bible, which has a status like the King James or the NIV in English. It was completed in 1880 and has been revised several times.

Mande – Global term for an ethnolinguistic family of peoples who inhabit several modern African countries: Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mauritania. Two of the Mande peoples, the Soninké and the Maninka, were the ethnic groups who formed the nucleus of the Ghana and Mali empires, respectively. Other Mande peoples include the Bamana, the Mandingo, the Mandinka, the Xasonka, the Susu, and the Jula. The griot class of artisans probably originated in the Mande peoples.

Moolo (Mali: *kubur*) – Two- or three-stringed plucked lute.

Mossi – An ethnolinguistic group of people living in modern-day Burkina Faso, Togo, and Mali.

Ngoni – Name for the plucked lute in the Mande family of languages. The *ngoni* usually has more strings (4-7) than the Songhai *moolo*.

Niamey – Capital city of Niger, it is a relatively new city for Africa, founded only in the last decade of the nineteenth century, about the same time as the arrival of the French colonialists.

Ŋwaareyko (Alternate spelling: *ŋaareyko*) – Someone who asks for handouts, panhandler. When used of the *jesere*, the word has a pejorative connotation.

Nyama – A Mande word meaning mysterious power or force which can be transformed into words, which then have a deep impact on both listeners and speakers.

Nyamakala – A term borrowed from Mande languages, which is used to designate the *jesere* amongst the Songhai.

Sahel – From the Arabic word for 'shore', this term is used in English to designate the area running across the African continent on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert.

Sansari – A type of metal rattle often attached to traditional Songhai stringed instruments or drums.

Songhai (Alternate spellings: Songhay, Songhoy, Soŋey, Soŋay) – The term for an ethnic group of peoples who once controlled a vast empire in the heart of West Africa. It is also a term for the language spoken by these people. The term is often used by linguists and social scientists to designate the ethnolinguistic family of peoples who speak dialects of the Songhai language.

Songhai/Zarma – A term used to designate the ethnolinguistic family of peoples speaking dialects of the Songhai language. The Zarma are the largest group in the family while the Songhai have often been the dominant group politically and socially.

Soninké – Name for the people who formed the nucleus of the Ghana Empire. They are part of the Mande ethnolinguistic family of peoples. The term Soninké is also the word for the language of this ethnic group.

Sonni Ali Ber – The founder of the Songhai Empire and one of its greatest kings. Ruled 1464-1492.

Soŋey – The way most Songhai pronounce the name for their ethnic group and language.

Sorko – Term used to designate a fisherman, the word doubles as a term for the praise-singer who calls on the spirits in the family of *Dongo*. This praise singer always comes from the fisher clan of people and inherits the position from his ancestors.

Sududu (Alternate spelling: *sujudu*) – The Songhai word for 'worship', it literally means 'to bow down', a similar meaning to the main Hebrew and Greek words for worship in the Bible.

Takamba – A type of festive music performed by Songhai and Tuareg musicians in Mali for events like weddings and naming ceremonies.

Tradi-moderne – A French term which designates the combination of traditional and modern elements in a person, place, or thing. In the context of music, it often refers to bands that fuse traditional and modern elements.

Yeenandi (Alternate spelling: *yeenendi*; Alternate term: *dobu soso*) – Literally 'to cool off'. A ceremony occurring in the 'seventh month' of the dry season (May) invoking the spirits to send a good rainy season. The term may also be used for a ceremony which 'cools off' a person or home which has been struck by lightning.

Yeeti-yeeta – A traditional song used by women to announce the pregnancy of another woman. In traditional culture, pregnancy was a taboo subject in public conversation because it might invoke the predatory interest of the spirits. People observing a pregnant woman's 'illness' might assume she had the flu or malaria. The use of this song by women pounding grain or working together was a subtle way to inform people of what was really happening without making the spirits aware of the pregnancy.

Zamu – Praise-singing or praise-poetry for people or for spirits. This word can be used as a verb or a noun. Another way to make the verb into a noun is to add the suffix *–yaŋ* (or *–yoŋ*): *zamuyaŋ.*

Zarma (Alternate spellings: Djerma, Zerma) – The largest ethnic group that forms part of the Songhai/Zarma ethnolinguistic family of peoples.

Zarma Baytu Tira – Zarma songbook used in a number of churches associated with the UEEBN.

Zarmaphone – A word used to designate a person who habitually uses Zarma or a geographical place where Zarma is a prominent language.

Zima – The priest-healer of the possession-trance cult known as the *fooley foori.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGK Assemblies of God Kombo

AIC African Initiated Church

AMEEN *Alliance des Missions et Églises Évangéliques du Niger* (Alliance of Evangelical Missions and Churches of Niger)

CFPM *Centre de Formation et de Promotion Musicale* (Centre for Musical Training and Promotion)

EBCG Evangelical Baptist Church Goudel

EBM Evangelical Baptist Mission

EEI *Église Évangélique Internationale* (International Evangelical Church)

HCK Hosanna Church Kollo

ICE International Council of Ethnodoxologists

IMB International Mission Board (Southern Baptist)

LXX The Septuagint

NASB New American Standard Version

NGO Non-government organization

NIV New International Version

SIL Summer Institute of Linguistics (or *Societé Internationale Linguistique*, International Linguistic Society)

SIM Serving in Mission (or *Société Internationale Missionnaire*)

TF Tarikh al-Fettach

TS Tarikh as-Sudan

UEEBN *Union des Églises Évangéliques Baptistes du Niger* (Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Niger)

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Prelude

'The Zarma do not have any of their own [worship] songs. They are all translated from other languages.' (HY in DeValve 2015c:5)

The comment came from a member of the Hosanna Church Kollo (HCK) during the Sunday service on 08 March 2015. The Zarma group in the church had just sung a song in their native language. The song was a chorus translated from French entitled, 'He Is the God of Miracles'. The song can be heard at the following link: http://bit.ly/2lVk3Tl. It was the part of the service at the HCK where each language group in the church got up to sing a song. While the other groups like the Tuareg, the Hausa, and the Gurmancé sang original songs employing indigenous melodies and lots of movement, the Zarma had trouble coming up with a song to sing, and their gestures seemed stiff and uncomfortable. When they were done, HY made the comment as a sort of apology. His words succinctly summarize the nature and scope of this study. While what he said is an exaggeration, by comparison with other cultures in Niger and West Africa, the Songhai/Zarma have very few Christian worship songs composed by their own people (JD 2012, 1:23:19-1:23:43). Almost all are translated from other languages and use a foreign melody.

HY was not the only person in this research with such sentiments. In an e-mail conversation with TB, my interlocutor said this about the current repertoire of music in the Zarma church, 'A great majority of the Zarma people remain attached to their oral traditions. They can view this way of singing as foreign to their reality.' (TB-A 2013, #X-B; DA 2014, #XXII-B) Another research participant added: 'Music is not exactly in the … Zarma culture.' (HK 2013, 48:03-48:15) One missionary colleague who is a musician expressed the same frustrations I have felt concerning the lack of singing and playing of instruments by Songhai people (MP 2016, 27:13-29:20). It is not true to say

that there is no music in the Zarma and related Songhai cultures. In fact, there is a rich history of music, song, and dance. What is more, I have witnessed with my own eyes that the Songhai/Zarma love to listen and dance to music. I recall one such inspirational moment.

It was 25 December 2002. The four small, recently-formed churches in Téra, a large town in Niger, were meeting for their first-ever joint Christmas celebration. It was a rather stiff, formal service. There was some congregational singing accompanied by a *jembe* and cymbals. Several people read Scripture, and my message, translated from French into Songhai, was rather bland. Each church presented a choral number. I sang a Christmas song with my family accompanied by my guitar. For the most part, it was all quite staid, and, I might say, rather boring.

All that changed, however, when the choir from a nearby village church got up. The people of this village are mostly poor, semi-literate farmers and are not Songhai. The choir was composed mainly of women, with a male lead cantor and a man playing a small drum. The song was a simple, call-and-response chorus with the male cantor singing a line and the choir responding to his lead. The cantor sang in falsetto, and the song used a pentatonic scale. They sang in Gurmancéma, a language unknown to most Songhai present.

As soon as they started, the congregation erupted. Drooping heads snapped up. Eyes lit up with a new glow. People began clapping and swaying to the beat. To my outsider eyes and ears, there was nothing remarkable about the song. The choir was neither swaying nor dancing. They were standing in place and singing rather quietly. They did not even seem to be together on the same note. The only movement in the choir was the occasional lifting of the arm of the cantor as he stabbed the air to make a point and the tapping of the drum by the drummer. Nevertheless, the audience was standing, clapping, and dancing to the beat. Women began ululating. The tumult

increased dramatically. People rushed forward and placed coins and bills at the feet of the choir or pressed them to the forehead of the cantor, a sign of appreciation and encouragement (DeValve 2002; NY-B 2014, #III-E).

As I stood watching, fascinated by the spectacle, I sensed that here was an authentic African expression of Christian worship. It meant very little to me, but it obviously meant a lot to those present, even though most did not understand the words. I wondered if this kind of music could be developed for worship in the Songhai language using Songhai musical styles and instruments. Would it be accepted? Would people enjoy it? Would they sing it? What effect would it have on believers and non-believers? Who would create it? Would urban churches like such music as well as rural churches? What was preventing the Songhai church from creating music like this? Would worship feel more comfortable and less alien to both believers and unbelievers if it contained some elements from the Songhai musical culture?

Another incident which reveals Songhai sentiments about music occurred in October of 2004. I was talking with some new Christians in Téra about worship and music. One of them asked, 'Is it necessary to have guitars in worship?' (Téra believers 2004) I understood the reason for the question. They were hesitant to accept musical instruments in worship, both because of their Islamic background and their cultural Songhai background. One of the young men in the group had already stated that 'guitar music is for white people'. Another had offered the insight that the Songhai are very constrained in their behaviours and tastes. I left the discussion with more questions. What do I as a musician have to offer the Songhai, if anything? What kinds of music and song are appropriate for the Songhai in a worship setting? What model should be used for singing in Songhai churches? How can those who have different perspectives on music understand and appreciate each other?

These two incidents and the questions they provoked were the catalyst to launch me on this research journey. Before proceeding any further, however, I must step back and relate my personal journey to this point and the qualifications I bring to this research. Then I will return to the scope and aims of the research and outline where I am headed and what I intend to accomplish.

2. My Personal Journey

Boro kaŋ man naaru si du lakkal. 'The person who has not travelled will not gain wisdom.' – Songhai Proverb (Maiga 2010:76)

In his book *How Musical Is Man?* ethnomusicologist John Blacking describes two kinds of people. The first are those limited by their cultural understanding, unable to think outside the box of their culturally-conditioned concepts of music and musical ability. Such people, Blacking says, mistake the means of culture for its ends and live '*for* culture' (original emphasis) (1973:5–7). Blacking portrays the second kind of people as those who can think and act outside of their cultural limitations. He says these people live '*beyond* culture' (original emphasis). C Michael Hawn calls this latter posture a state of 'liminality' (1999:118–19). The Oxford Dictionary of English gives two senses for the word 'liminal': 1) 'relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process', or 2) 'occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold' (Soanes & Stevenson 2010). My use of the word liminality in this thesis relies heavily on the second sense of the word. It is a 'state of continuity and discontinuity at the same time, a kind of bi-cultural identity' (Hawn 1999:118–19). To put it another way, it is a condition of living between worlds, or on the borderland between them, where life is unsettling and disconcerting.

I live in a state of liminality. Born in a country not my own, I resided nearly half my childhood outside of the United States. I have also spent most of my adult life outside my passport country. Most of that time, I have lived in Niger, where I have become an insider to the Songhai culture. After 16 years of sustained residence in an

isolated town (Téra), I speak the language, wear appropriate dress, and observe many cultural practices and taboos (Taylor 1986:42–3, 51; Stoller & Olkes 1987:21). I eat the native food and bear a Songhai name and identity. I participate with people in their daily activities and in rites of passage with families and communities. I work with local people, share their ordeals, and advocate their cause.

I am an outsider-insider (Hiebert 2009:198). As the Songhai proverb vividly puts it, 'Even though a log remains in the water a long time, it never becomes a crocodile' (Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:44). I am a white stranger who will never be an insider to Songhai culture. Besides my skin colour and nationality, I possess things that are far beyond the reach of all but the most elite: a car, a private house, and amenities most could only dream of. My outsider status goes beyond mere possessions, however. I can get all the medical care I need. I go 'on holiday'. I have training and knowledge that most Songhai could never obtain. My passport culture continues to affect my thoughts and actions, even though I understand and appreciate many African ways. While I have resided many years in the country, my ignorance of Songhai culture comes out at inopportune times (Nida 2008:53). My outsider status also becomes evident when my Songhai friends express knowledge or demonstrate skills about which I understand little. In all my years in Téra, for example, I knew little about Songhai music and never learned the names of traditional instruments. In addition, until I began this research, I was a relative outsider to the Songhai church. There were no churches in Téra until late in our time there. When I visited Niamey, the church I attended was not Songhai. Though I was known to some of the Songhai Christian leaders, I had visited few Songhai churches. I had rarely attended Christian weddings or funerals and did not know the protocols for these ceremonies.

My identity as an outsider-insider is often confusing and ambiguous. Am I American or African? Am I more at home in the US or in Niger? My ontological status

is hybrid and dynamic, and the word 'home' is a vague and constructed concept for me (Stock & Chiener 2008:110–13). I live in a constant state of liminality between insider and outsider, between poverty and riches, between west and south, between the demands of people and the demands of time, between the past and the future, between continuity and discontinuity, between minority and dominant cultures, between the community and the individual. I am on the threshold between worldviews: my Christian one, the traditional/Muslim/African one, and the secular/postmodern one. Who am I? I am multicultural, living in and for cultures but beyond culture. I am a person who, like a chameleon, changes colour to fit my environment. I am both/and and neither/nor. My identity as both outsider and insider has shaped my life and my research journey.

One result of my established identities is the difficulty I had constructing a research identity. Many people in Niger know me so well that it is hard for them to see me in a different role. This is not all bad. The relationships I had previously developed provided a wide-open *entrée* into the Songhai and their culture. Indeed, as Nicole Beaudry has observed, '[H]uman relationships rather than methodology determined the quantity and quality of the information gathered.' (2008:229) Still, I struggled to create an identity that was more neutral. At times I was too much of an insider to differentiate the research from who I am. I had to keep checking myself to avoid allowing my prior knowledge of the culture to interfere with the process of listening, learning, and becoming (Reck et al. 2001:293). For example, I encountered multiple difficulties taking field notes because it was hard to separate the research from my life and work (Kisliuk 2008:184). I have long kept a life journal, and it became confusing to try to keep a separate field journal and decide which elements of my day should be recorded in one and which should be recorded in the other. Consequently, my field notes often ended up scattered in the margins of interviews or embedded in the text of questionnaires and secondary source notes.

I come to the research with academic and artistic qualifications related to the topics of music and worship in culture. I have extensive cross-cultural training and experience in African, European, and Asian settings. I learned French as a teenager and speak it fluently. I studied mathematics, theology, languages, linguistics, and the social sciences in secondary school and in university. Involved in church and corporate worship from my youth, I have familiarity with liturgy and different liturgical styles. In addition, I have wide-ranging training and background in musical performance and technique. Taught to play piano at a young age, I played for many church and social functions. In adult life, I learned to play the acoustic guitar and lead congregational singing. I also have vocal experience in choirs, chorales, and musical ensembles.

When I arrived in Téra with my cultural and musical background, I wondered why I had come to work with a people who seemed so ambivalent toward music and singing. The Songhai appeared indifferent to musical ideas and suggestions, while the nearby Gurmancé would take suggestions and ideas and readily incorporate them into worship and church functions. I wondered why there was such a difference between neighbouring peoples. In 2010, after I had left Téra, I expressed my feelings in a field note while reading Roberta King's article, 'Toward a Discipline of Christian Ethnomusicology':

> I have been frustrated with the Christian Songhai I have known who seem to have little interest in music. What is the relationship of music to the Songhai? How do they see worship? Could they create music which is truly their own? Where does music fit in the culture and the church? And how can the disciplines of ethnomusicology, missiology, and theology help me sort out the answers to some of these questions? (DeValve in the margins of King 2004:296)

3. Importance of the Research

Eric Charry states that 'musicological writing about Africa lags behind other kinds of writing'. Since questions of identity are so keenly played out in music, he says, this lack of scholarship hampers the ability to understand and analyse African life (2000b:352). There are a few scholars who have examined West African musics (Hale 1998:171;

Stone 2008:166). To my knowledge, however, no one has attempted to portray a comprehensive survey of Songhai music. In fact, Veit Erlmann claims that no one has ever undertaken a systematic study of Songhai music (2005:905). As far as I know, his statement remains true. While some scholars have made excellent contributions to the field, they have generally focused on one dimension of the Songhai music-culture or referred to it in relation to other aspects of society.[1] The relative lack of scholarship on this subject is all the more glaring compared to the more complete and detailed descriptions of the music of the neighbouring Mande cultures.[2] Like these works, the subject of traditional Songhai music is worthy of an entire book, but my main purpose in this thesis is to look at music in the church and compare it with the traditional music-culture. In this regard, my aim will be to expand the knowledge of Songhai music by providing a simple description and analysis of it.

According to Felix Muchimba, very little has been written about African Christian music (2008:59, 79). This lack of documentation, according to Jean Kidula, can lead to marginalisation and disempowerment (2013:xix). Many have thought that church music was little more than an importation, or, worse, an imposition by Western missionaries and not authentically African. As such, it was not worthy of concentrated study. Kidula disputes the notion that Christian music in Africa cannot be authentically African. She says that a recognition of African Christian musics starts with analysing African forms and realising that music is important in identity construction (2013:1–2; Agawu 2003:148; Diawara 1998:194–5). She further states that

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[1] For example, the works of Rouch (1954b; 1996), Stoller (1984; 1987; 1989a), and Surugue (1972; 2004) deal mainly with the 'possession-trance' cult. Scholars like Thomas Hale (1990; 1998) and Sandra Bornand (1999; 2001; 2002; 2004a; 2004b; 2005) have done extensive work examining the 'griot' culture of the Songhai. There are the works of several Nigerien and Malian scholars: Ahmadu and Mahamadou Maiga (1978), Hassimi Maiga (2010), Mahamane Karimou (1972), and Mahaman Garba (1992). In addition, there are brief entries in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Sadie & Tyrrell 2001) and *The Garland Handbook of African Music* (Stone 2008) on Songhai music.

[2] The works of Eric Charry(1992; 1996; 2000a; 2000b), Roderic Knight (1973; 1991), Barbara Hoffman (1990; 1995; 2000), Lucy Durán (1989; 1999; 2006), and Banning Eyre (2000) are examples of this.

> Contemporary music identity is an amorphous but essential construct in the tide of political, social, and economic motion for Africans. This identity is informed, consolidated, and transformed in dialogue with the African indigenous cultural past and the intra-African (continental and diasporic) contact over time. It is further complicated by historical and contemporary encounters with non-Africans that resulted in the reconstruction of indigenous social, political, and religious values; the adoption of new religious and political convictions; and the integration or restructuring of local and global music cultures. (2013:12)

The main argument of this thesis follows Kidula's point that musical identity amongst Songhai Christians is a construct of multiple cultural and historical encounters and interactions. To demonstrate this, I will describe traditional Songhai music in the form it is taking in the early twenty-first century and use this as a base to analyse the current repertoire of songs in the Songhai church. I will show how five cultural and historical factors are influencing Songhai Christian musical choices. Drawing on Mary Douglas' grid/group cultural theory, I will further propose a new model for examining the Songhai Christian identity and a new paradigm for worship and music in the Songhai church.

Western hymnody dominated the African church until the 1950s, but since then, Africans have begun composing their own music for church (Muchimba 2008:59; King 2008b:119; Tovey 2004:33). The movement toward creating indigenous styles and tunes of music in African churches has not reached every corner of the continent, however. Some communities have barely started down that road. One of my aims in this thesis is to investigate a group of people who have made little headway in welcoming locally-created worship music. This is important because, as Muchimba says,

> There is no doubt that the practice of Christianity in Africa is heavily influenced by western cultures. This in itself is not necessarily wrong, but it has the negative effect of inhibiting African Christians from practicing their faith in ways they understand and can easily relate to. Consequently, some Africans view Christianity as a western religion. (2008:2)

Another important concern of this research deals with its applicability and transferability. There have already been at least four attempts by Westerners to encourage Songhai believers to create their own worship music. The first was in 1994, when SIM missionary Josiane Waridel sponsored research into traditional music and

recorded a series of story-songs based on Songhai fables (1994). The second was in 2001 when the International Mission Board (IMB) held a workshop to create worship music for the church. As a result of that workshop, the IMB recruited a couple to work with the Songhai to facilitate the creation of appropriate worship music for church (PC-A 2010, #IV; PC-B 2011, #II; Ferguson & Taylor 2001:1). Finally, in early 2011, SIL held a workshop for all the ethnolinguistic groups represented in the Nigerien church. Each was encouraged to create its own set of songs and tunes for church worship (CB 2012, 3:17-4:52). These initiatives had varying degrees of success, and some of the music created has been used in limited ways, but they all failed in one important aspect: they had little discernible effect on the current worship music in Songhai churches and have not inspired Songhai and Zarma Christians to take up the mantle of song creation for themselves. It is not as if there are no Songhai Christians who are musicians. I am weary, however, of outsiders taking the initiative to promote song creation. I do not want to run another workshop and end up with the same results (DH & MH1 2014, 1:04:02-1:04:54).

My purpose, then, is not to create or facilitate the creation of more Songhai/Zarma worship music. Rather, my purpose is to go behind the scenes to discover the attitudes and perceptions people have towards music in the culture and in the church (CB 2012, 12:31-13:21). My aim is to determine why it is so hard for the Songhai to create music using indigenous styles and instruments and why what is created has such a limited impact. This research, then, will focus on finding out what is going on with music in the culture and the church. I will examine the factors that are limiting Songhai Christians from creating worship music for church and put forward some ideas to move beyond the current limitations. This, I hope, will be a catalyst for me and for Nigeriens to evaluate our worship practices and music styles and put an effort into thinking about why and how we do what we do. It is important to clarify the role of music in contemporary

Songhai churches and investigate the relationship of the churches to traditional music as well as to music from the outside (CB 2012, 2:51-3:17).

I do not advocate discarding the repertoire of songs we currently use in Niger. Rather, I wish to promote a fresh look at the repertoire and new ways of getting the church to sing and dance. I agree with Mark Hatcher, who says that

> There has been enough diffusion and enthusiastic acceptance of non-indigenous Christian songs across cultures and history to indicate that the primary issue is their agreeableness to the musical tastes of the people, their effectiveness in lodging within people's minds, and their suitability to the clear communication of gospel meaning. (2001:484–5)

Thus, I am not trying to exert pressure on my Songhai colleagues and friends to exchange Western songs for 'indigenous' ones. That would be inappropriate and neo-paternalistic. On the contrary, I affirm and support the decision of the churches to use what music is meaningful to them. My purpose is more to stimulate discussion, reflection, and action regarding worship and music in the Songhai church.

4. Scope

This research is an examination of a phenomenon, the use of borrowed worship music in Songhai Protestant churches. It is a study of current worship styles and practices and a comparison of that worship with the traditional music-culture. Using insights from several disciplines, I paint a portrait of the Songhai people, their traditional music-culture, and the Protestant church music-culture. To analyse my data, I use grid/group cultural theory as a frame to probe and evaluate the research findings. What follows in this section are some of the research parameters.

4.1 Fields of Research

This study is interdisciplinary, encompassing insights from liturgical study, theology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, missiology, and ritual studies (Tovey 2004:160). It is part ethnography, part personal journey, part musical and cultural analysis, part theologising, and part investigative reporting. I employ techniques and ideas from the disciplines mentioned above and borrow concepts from grid/group cultural theory to

organize and analyse my data. My purpose is to build on what others have done and lay the groundwork for further serious thought and practice on the issue of a worship and music in the Songhai context.

4.2 Goals

Here are some contributions I can make to the conversation about music in the culture and in the church (Nettl 2005:264–6; Shelemay 2008:142–3; King 2008a:5–8):

1) Stimulate further discussion by both insiders and international scholars about music, culture, and the church;

2) Provoke a mutually beneficial dialogue between the church in the west and the church in the south;

3) Document the story and place of music in the life of one African church;

4) Kindle a respect for one of the world's musical cultures in scholarly and ecclesiastical circles;

5) Have a lasting input on the insider culture and nation;

6) Put a new perspective on people's understanding of culture and music; and

7) Promote the transmission and preservation of a rich musical tradition.

4.3 Sources

My primary sources for this research were Songhai people and churches. Through observation, interviews, case studies, and lessons on the three-stringed lute, I engaged in dialogue with Songhai people to learn about their music and their attitudes toward music. The data I present comes from fieldwork and from my reflections living and working alongside the Songhai over many years. Secondary source material comes from the disciplines mentioned above (Section 4.1) and includes ethnographies, books, films, articles, theses, and other documents from the scholarly and ecclesiastical worlds. All Bible citations are from the New International Version (Barker 1995) unless otherwise stated.

I cite primary sources in the following manner. To protect the confidentiality of each participant, I use their initials.[3] Following the initials and the year of the interview, I put the time in which the citation appears on the interview transcript (example: IH 2014, 40:16-44:39). For people who have the same initials, I add a number according to the order in which I interviewed them (example: HM4). Occasionally, I did follow-up interviews with participants. If an '–A' follows the initials, it refers to the first interview with that person. A '–B' after the initials refers to a follow-up interview. If the interview was not recorded, after the initials and year I place a hashtag followed by the question number of the interview in Roman numerals. If there were sub-questions under the primary one, I continue the numbering using standard outline format (example: SS 2012, #I-B-2). For focus groups, I listed a title for the group (Men, Elders, Women) in place of the initials. For church observations, I used an abbreviation to designate the church denomination followed by a number which designates the particular church. The numbers are in the order I visited them (example: AD-7).

4.4 Limitations

Writing about music is a challenging and limiting task. How does one put on paper what one hears and feels and performs? While both writing and music are related to speech, neither is the same as speech. Much of the experience of music gets lost in writing about it. John Chernoff states that

> The most important gap for the participant-observer … is not between what he sees and what is there, but between his experience and how he is going to communicate it. In attempting to do anthropological research, to translate the 'structures' and 'processes' which appear in another culture into the textual structures of his own, a social scientist must evaluate his own experience with flexibility. Finding the proper level of abstraction to portray with fidelity both the relativity of his own viewpoint and the reality of the world he has witnessed necessarily involves an act of interpretation. (1981:11)

What appears in this thesis, then, are my interpretations of the phenomena I have witnessed. I do not believe they are completely different from what the Songhai see and

[3] In light of the events of 16-17 January 2015, in which 76 churches and many Christian homes, schools, and businesses were burned in Niger, I feel justified in making the decision to protect the confidentiality of my research participants.

hear, but they do reflect my viewpoint. It resembles the situation in which two people witness an accident from different angles. Their positions and stances will inevitably colour their testimonies of the incident. Neither position is totally wrong, but each testimony is both partial and imperfect. With that in mind, here are some further limitations I imposed on the research and some limitations that were imposed on me.

To make my research more focused and manageable, I did little analysis of the technical, artistic, or aesthetic aspects of Songhai music. Instead, I looked mainly at the role of music in its social and cultural context, and how it relates to people and the church (Merriam 1964:6–7, 14–15). I therefore did not focus on the study of song texts or the analysis of musical style. Neither did I use the technique of music transcription. Rather, my emphasis in the thesis is on the material aspects of music and on music in relation to other aspects of culture (Garba 1992:20–21).

My emphasis in this research is on the Protestant church. Because of French influence, the impact of the Roman Catholic Church in Francophone countries is sometimes greater than that of the Protestant church. While I have observed and learned from Catholics for the sake of comparison, I have focused my research on Protestants for the following reasons:

1) Catholics are more numerous than any Protestant denomination in Niger, and it would render the research too broad if I had extended it to the Catholic Church.

2) Protestant Songhai churches are having trouble creating indigenous worship music.[4]

3) My church contacts are mainly amongst the Protestant community.

4) Very little has been written by or about the Songhai Protestant church.

[4] Both Rob Baker (2012:115) and Thomas Hale (2010, #XII-B) observed that Catholics have been more open to traditional forms of music than Protestants. I have observed two masses in different Catholic parishes in Niamey (one of which was billed as a 'Zarma' service) and was disappointed to hear little indigenous Nigerien music (either instruments or tunes) in the worship service. Some of my participants told me that the Catholic parish in Dolbel north of Téra has more indigenous styles and instruments, but for security reasons (proximity to the Mali border), I was unable to visit there.

Another limitation of the research involves the history of Songhai music. There are too few written sources available to construct a reliable history of music amongst the Songhai. I will relate what is known, but it is very sketchy. Of course, historical elements do play a role in the current expression of the Songhai traditional music-culture and have an important impact on this research (Hale 1998:272–85, 313–20; Diawara 1996; Bornand 1999:295–8). What is clear, however, is that music in the Sahel region of Africa has undergone dramatic changes through contact with the West and with Islam in the past two centuries. Thus, my emphasis here is on the current use of music in the Songhai church and culture.

An unfortunate limitation imposed on this research was the issue of security. At the beginning of my research journey, I had hoped to survey the culture and churches in Mali, the Songhai heartland. The impact of extremist groups operating in the desert region of West Africa closed the door to research in that country as well as some areas of northern Niger. Except for a few interviews with people from Mali, I had to limit my research to places in Niger and Benin. While this is regrettable, I did not want to place my life or anyone else's in jeopardy.

There is insufficient space in this thesis for an extensive, in-depth study of music amongst the Songhai/Zarma peoples, although I recognize the necessity for such a study. The research is comprehensive but concise, focusing only on the major elements of traditional Songhai music and its social and cultural role in society and in the church. Similarly, this is not the place for a full ethnography of the Songhai people. I have provided a summary of the history and culture of the Songhai and their music in Chapter Two, but otherwise I will make use of these elements only as they relate to and set the scene for the study of music in the church.

There are three final distinctions I need to make which set boundaries on this work. First, I am mainly concerned with worship in a communal setting. Often, that

setting is a building or structure, but it may be outside a church building during celebrations and social events. Thus, I am not concerned with private acts of devotion and piety.

Second, I need to define the term ‘church’. In this thesis, the church is a community of people in a particular locality who take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as their authority for belief and practice. They emphasize the salvific work of Christ through his life, death, and resurrection as the central theme of their faith. While the broader meaning of the word ‘church’ is not confined to a particular place or building, in this thesis, it usually refers either to local groups of believers who meet together regularly or to the Christian community amongst the Songhai.

A final distinction concerns the functions of music in liturgical settings. I am limiting this study of church music primarily to its worship function even though there is overlap with other functions like proclamation, teaching, and edification.

4.5 Audience

My primary audience for this research is the Songhai/Zarma Christian community. Through this study, I hope to promote dialogue, critical thinking, and action about music and worship in the church (TB-B 2013, 24:41-26:22). The questions I have asked in this chapter will have a wider applicability to the worldwide Christian community, but my primary focus is on the church in a particular region. Another important research audience is the scholarly world, especially theologians, missiologists, missionaries, and academics who are interested in issues related to liturgy and the use of music in worship.

5. Terms and Spellings

There are a number of terms that I need to define more precisely. The first is the somewhat awkward appellation Songhai/Zarma. The Songhai and the Zarma were two different ethnic groups that moved to what is today Niger, Mali, and Benin several

centuries ago. In the twenty-first century they share a culture and language. I will sometimes use the terms separately to refer to people from each ethnic group. My use of the term Songhai/Zarma highlights the ethnolinguistic group as a whole, but at times I resort to the simpler name Songhai to designate the entire group. The context will clarify if I am referring to the Songhai as a whole or to the Songhai ethnic group proper.

There are variant spellings for both Songhai and Zarma in the literature. The most common variant for the former is 'Songhay' (Stoller 1989a; Hale 1990; Cissoko 1984; Dubois 1899; Fuglestad 1983). Others spell it as I do (Bovill 1933; Davidson 1998; Charry 2000b; Bebey 1975; Villiers & Hirtle 2007). French texts often use Sonrai. I have chosen the spelling that I think most closely approximates my English pronunciation of the word. No variation really comes close to the pronunciation of the Songhai themselves: *Soŋey* (see the pronunciation guide at the beginning of the thesis) (Zoumari 1982). As for the term Zarma, other spellings include Zerma and Djerma, the latter being the term most commonly used in French. All three spellings reflect actual pronunciation of Zarma people from different dialects.

Another word I use in this thesis is the term 'Nigerien'. In English it is impossible to distinguish between a citizen of Niger and a citizen of Nigeria. Both would be 'Nigerian'. French makes the distinction clear by putting a second 'e' in the place of the 'a' for a citizen of Niger. To minimise confusion, I have used the French term for a citizen of Niger without an acute accent on the first 'e'.

It is also important that I define the term 'Western' since I use it so much in the text. When I use the word, I am generally referring to the peoples and cultures which have their origin in Western Europe. This includes Canada and the United States even though both these countries are a mixture of peoples, many of whom do not come from Europe. While Western Europe and North America have many different cultures, they share similar worldviews and perspectives on art (Wolterstorff 1980:24–8). Since these

countries dominated the world in the twentieth century and have a hegemonic cultural and social influence in the contemporary world (Farhadian 2007:154; Hawn 1999:127), I will often group them under this term, even though it is contested and ambiguous.

I also use the terms 'traditional' and 'indigenous' quite freely in the thesis and need to explain what I mean by them. In this thesis, I put a heavy emphasis on what Brian Schrag calls 'heritage traditions'. By this he means traditions that are older, more rural, more localized geographically, and emanate from particular ethnolinguistic communities (2010:56). Taking Schrag's definition as my point of departure, I would define 'traditional' Songhai music as that which existed in some form before the colonial era, is produced locally by professional musicians brought up in the culture using locally-made materials, and is claimed by Songhai/Zarma people as their own. The term 'indigenous' has similar connotations for me without any definite time period attached to it (MD1 2014, 47:36-48:08).

I realise the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' can lead to misunderstanding and confusion. They may imply either/or thinking about music: either a primitive past or a modernized present. They may also give the impression that, before the advent of the colonial era, Africans lived in a static, primitive present (Agawu 2003:5). Change only occurred as they made contact with and came under the influence of Europeans (Manning 1988:184; Bohlman 2008:256–7; Nettl 1978:12–13). My use of the terms is in no way meant to imply any type of either/or ideology or praxis. Quite the contrary, 'Traditional and modern worldviews complement each other, meld together, and also remain distinct in … Africa.' (Charry 2000b:24, 27) Nor do I mean to infer that change did not occur before the nineteenth century or that Africans are or were in any way inferior to other peoples (Agawu 2003:182). Rather, I am looking at African 'traditions' as valuable contributions to the world's knowledge and historical database. I am using terms that other Africans and scholars have used to describe a way of life that has roots

in African soil and is in many ways distinct from other traditions but in no way excludes or diminishes them.[5]

The term 'professional' can also be misleading. In this context, it does not necessarily refer to those who earn their primary income through music. That is rare amongst the Songhai in the twenty-first century (Erlmann 2005:905). Instead, it refers to a class of musicians who inherited the profession from their ancestors or who are recognized as musicians through compensation for their services (Merriam 1964:125–6; JD 2012, 57:02-57:17; JM & MA 2012, 48:32-49:29; GZ 2013, #IV). Many of them had free-born or noble patrons who supplied their needs. While that type of musician still exists, it is the exception to the rule.

The spellings of several sets of terms need further explanation. One is the word *jembe*. The most common spelling for this West African drum in the literature is *djembe*. Eric Charry says that the latter spelling is a legacy of French colonialism and does not reflect a phonetic rendering of the word (2000a). As a linguist, I agree with him that spellings which use more than one symbol for a single phoneme are unnecessary. Furthermore, it is not like I am singling out French spellings. I would also use only a 'c' to represent the 'ch' sound in English when writing African languages. Thus, I prefer Gurmancé to Gurmanché. My view on this is supported by a French scholar who used phonetic spellings in her book analysing the possession-trance cult amongst Hausa women in Niger (Monfouga-Nicolas 1972:vi).

For place names in Songhai regions, I have generally chosen conventional English spellings of the words rather than their French equivalents. Since I am writing in English, I want my readers to be able to recognize and pronounce the place names as comfortably as possible. I also am following the linguistic principle of one symbol for

[5] For examples of those who use the terms 'traditional', 'indigenous', and 'modern', see, Garba (1992:14–15), Bornand (2005), Charry (2000b), Olivier de Sardan (1984), Diawara (1996), Agawu (2003:12), McLaughlin (1997), Nettl (1985), Muchimba (2008), Krabill (2006) , and Nketia (1974).

each phoneme. Thus, for example, I have used the spellings ‘Timbuktu’ and ‘Jenné’ rather than the preferred French spellings ‘Tombouctou’ and ‘Djenné’. As for place names that are generally recognizable and in much current use like Ougadougou and Abidjan, I have kept the French spellings rather than write Wagadugu and Abijan. I have kept spellings of personal names the way they are spelled on their identity cards.

6. Chapter Summaries

In this chapter I have introduced my research topic, described my personal journey, explained the importance of the study, and outlined the scope and limitations of the research. In Chapter Two, I will give a short history of the Songhai/Zarma peoples, describe briefly their culture and traditional music, and give an introductory sketch of music in the Songhai church. The chapter provides necessary background information to understand the context in which the Songhai live and serves as a literature review of the relevant, but limited, works on Songhai history and culture.

Chapter Three is a discussion about the disciplines of ethnomusicology and liturgical study and how they relate to this research. After outlining the history of grid/group theory and summarizing its main features, I delve into the main body of the chapter. I define and describe terms such as ethnomusicology, culture, and worship and review the main points of the two academic disciplines. Finally, I show how the disciplines shape this study and what contribution I can bring to the discussion within each of them. The chapter also serves as a literature review of the two disciplines.

In Chapter Four I present my research methodology. The chapter sets out the framework for this research: a qualitative study about music in the Songhai culture and church. Included are a discussion of my epistemological premises, the four methods I employed to obtain my data, and the strategies I used to assure the validity and dependability of the analysis. I also reflect further on grid/group cultural theory and its applicability to this research.

Chapters Five and Six constitute the heart of the thesis. It is here that I present a summary and analysis of my research findings. In Chapter Five I describe and examine traditional Songhai music – the ethnomusicological side of this thesis. I explore various aspects of that music using a model (described more fully in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.4) adapted from the ethnomusicological literature. This survey of Songhai music is important because

> A knowledge of traditional African music in its social context is … a prerequisite both for understanding the contemporary musical scene in Africa and for gaining some insight into the musical experience as it relates to the African in his personal and social life. (Nketia 1974:20)

Having laid down a basis for comparison, in Chapter Six I examine and analyse the music currently being sung in the Songhai Protestant Church – the liturgical/worship side of this thesis. I use the same model that I used in Chapter Five to describe and examine what the church is singing, how they understand music and its role in the church, what kinds of instruments they use to accompany singing, and who the musicians are.

In Chapter Seven, I bring the various threads of this study together with some critical thinking about cultures and identities as they are expressed in Songhai Christian music. I take a fresh look at the issue of borrowed worship music using the lens of grid/group cultural theory. I propose a new model for cultural theory which takes into account the complexities of the Songhai church situation. Building on insights from both ethnomusicology and liturgical study, I further propose a new paradigm for looking at questions regarding music, worship, and identity.

Chapter Eight serves as a summary of the main findings of this study. I present four main findings from each of the three areas of research: the traditional music-culture, the Songhai Protestant music-culture, and the study as a whole. The chapter will conclude with some ideas for further research and a final reflection.

7. Conclusion

I began the story of my life's journey by relating my experience of liminality. For most of my life I have found myself in a liminal state of continuity and discontinuity at the same time, of being a stranger and being at home in the same breath. I have sought to be someone that lives *beyond* culture, and yet I am *of* culture. I want to go beyond the stereotypes that a 'normative' culture imposes on anyone who is different (Hawn 1999:119), but I am limited by my cultural background. As both a stranger and a 'native' I have found myself in the ambiguous status Anthony Gittins describes:

> In some ways strangers are the very lifeblood of communities, particularly isolated ones. In spite of their potential danger, strangers bear gifts, they do things differently, they possess unusual wisdom and unfamiliar skills, and they have different perspectives. Such is the nature of human culture and sociality that communities are loath to exclude the stranger absolutely. Yet the host must control the stranger, and the stranger must learn the rules. Host communities that allow strangers a completely free rein will sooner or later lose their identity; and strangers who refuse to learn and respect local rules will lose their credibility. (1995:416)

My identity has been shaped by my many experiences in different cultures and by this research journey. I have changed as I walked with people on their paths, and they have changed through their relationship with me. I will continue to be a person who lives in the interstices of society, a stranger and a 'native'.

Some scholars apply the concept of liminality (in the sense of living between worlds) to Christian worship. For them it can be a place where sacred space and time meet the temporal and constitute a liminal experience for the worshipper. 'Worship can be understood in this context as the church community (or *communitas* or *koinonia*) enter into liminal space corporately', says Timothy Carson (2003:61). Songs, prayers, and liturgical acts are symbols which may help worshippers travel in a pilgrimage through liminal space. The congregation is transformed as they pass through this sacred space, and, as they exit, they are sent back into the world to serve (Tigan 1998:335). Alan Hirsch takes the idea further in his book, *The Forgotten Ways*. He applies the concept of liminality to the entire Christian church. Borrowing from Victor Turner,

Hirsch claims that liminality and *communitas* (a shared experience of ordeal or transition) should be the normative state of the people of God. He asserts that when Christians are out of their comfort zones, outlawed, persecuted, or on the margins of society, it is then that they are the most dynamic and inspiring (2006:220–23). This thesis is an exploration of the latent liminality of worship, particularly the musical forms Songhai people use to express their faith. Liturgical musical expression and performance often lies at the margins of cultures, between the church local and the church global. Music is also a form of communication with the supernatural, a way of connecting the material visible world to the mysterious invisible one, a bridge to the intangible and unknown. It is a symbol of the liminal identity of the worshippers as strangers and aliens in this world.

In conclusion, here is a third story my wife Nancy related to me which puts the research topic in perspective. At a women's meeting of the International Evangelical Church (EEI) in Niamey on 01 May 2015, most of the women present used Zarma or French as their preferred language. The message was translated from French into Zarma. Most of the songs they sang, however, were in Hausa or French (DeValve 2015). Why the lack of Zarma? I now present my investigation into the reasons for this phenomenon, searching for answers to the questions I have posed in this chapter.

Chapter Two: A History of the Songhai and Their Music

1. Introduction

Boro kaŋ dirgan bi si hõ bay – 'The person who forgets the past cannot understand the present.' – (Songhai Proverb) (Maiga 2010:32)

Before delving into the subject matter of this thesis, it is important to explain the context in which the study is set. In this chapter, I will give a brief introduction to the Songhai, tracing an outline of their history and culture. I will then relate what is known about their traditional music before the colonial era and how Euro-American music and modern global culture have had an impact on that tradition. I will conclude with a sketch of the coming of Christianity to the Songhai and the development of a Christian hymnody in churches that use the Songhai language.

2. Songhai History

2.1 The Songhai Environment

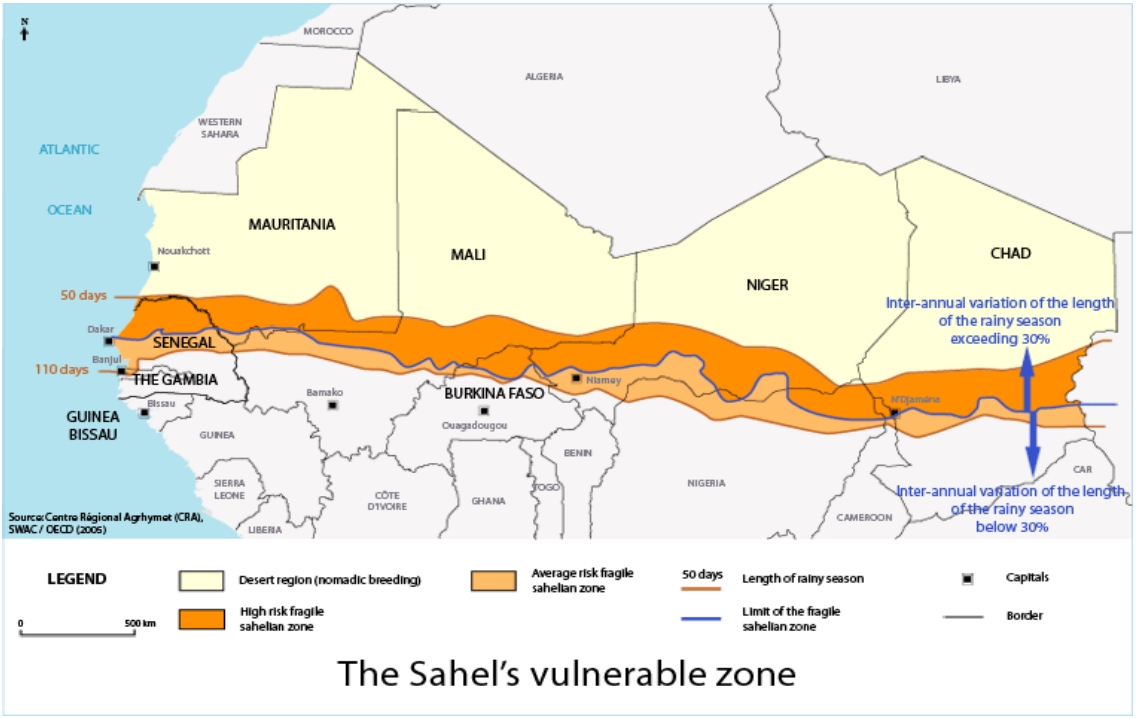
South of the Sahara, rocky plains and dunes gradually yield to plains of short grass and widely-separated, stunted trees (see photo 2-1). This thinly forested grassland, known in the twenty-first century as the Sahel,[1] is the northern part of the great African savannah and forms a precarious, shifting barrier to

Photo 2-1: The Sahel Credit: Nancy DeValve

[1] The word 'Sahel' comes from an Arabic word meaning 'shore'. The 'Sahel' is the 'shore' at the edge of the desert (Kryza 2006:xii; Levtzion 1976:116; Austen 2010:36). The cities which developed in the Sahel may be considered as 'ports' or commercial points of entry both from the desert to the north and from the forests to the south.

the desert. The Sahel traverses the continent for three thousand miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and varies in width from two to three hundred miles (see Map 2-1) (Centre Régionale Agrhymet 2006). The entire savannah region, including the Sahel, is ideal both for rearing animals and for growing a wide variety of crops such as millet, beans, and rice (Davidson 1970:72; Murphy 1972:82, 99–100; Chu & Skinner 1990:57).

Three large rivers traverse the savannah in West Africa: the Senegal, the Gambia,



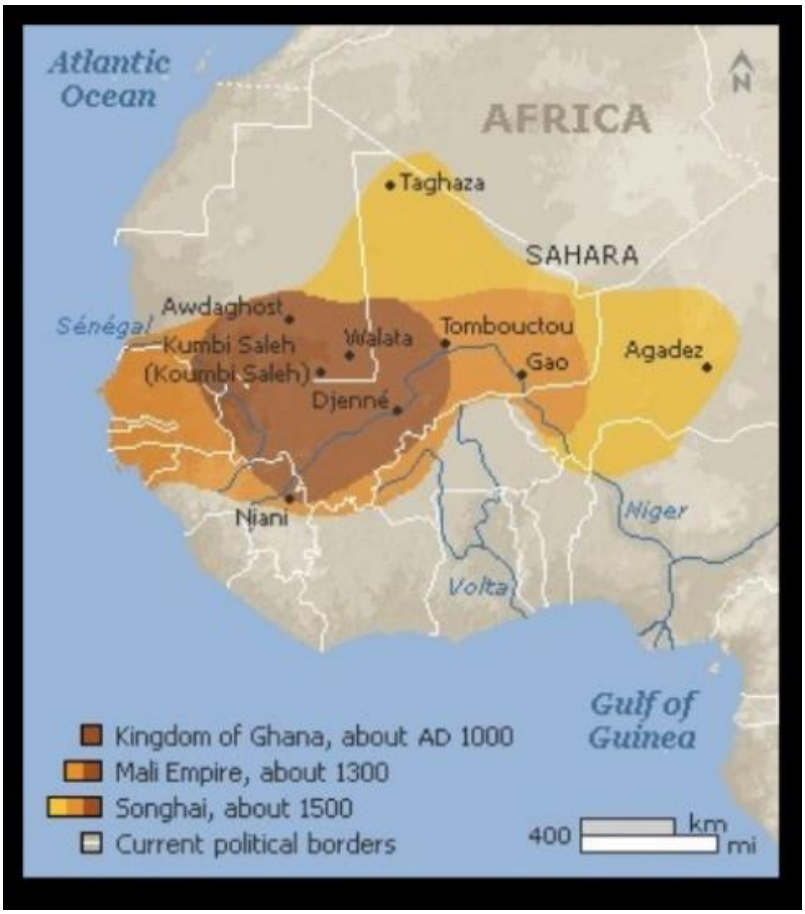
Map 2-1: The Sahel of West Africa

Source: Centre Régionale Agrhymet, Copyright Control

and the Niger. All three rise in the same general area near the Atlantic coast. The life-blood of the western savannah, however, is the Niger River. The grains and legumes grown along its banks and the fish netted from its waters provide sustenance for the local populations. Navigable for one thousand miles along its 'great bend', the river provides a convenient means of transportation and communication. It is sometimes called the oasis of the western savanna because it flows northeast towards the Sahara before turning southeast after Timbuktu (Onwubiko 1967:62, 97–8; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:1 12). Without it and its famous 'inland delta', which spreads the river's life-

giving water over a large area of the Sahel, the desert would extend further southward and the grasslands could not sustain such a large population (Cissoko 2000:123; Dubois 1899:50–60).

The entire African savannah came to be known in Arabic as the 'Bilad-al-Sudan', or 'land of the Blacks' (Murphy 1972:82; Porch 1986:129; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:9). The West African Sudan was the crucible for three great kingdoms which arose between AD 300 and AD 1600. These kingdoms, largely forgotten and not to be confused with any modern nation-state, are known to historians as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (see map 2-2) (LinkedIn 2011, Slide #20; Davidson 1970:79; Levtzion 1976:118; Chu & Skinner 1990). Relatively few scholars have studied these kingdoms in any depth, perhaps due to a perception of Africans as inferior, lacking in significant history. Modern scholarship has shattered that notion, but the perception lingers (Murphy 1972:293–5; Davidson 1970:76–8, 95–7; Grmont 1991:218).



Map 2-2: Extent of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai Kingdoms

Source: Slideshare, Open Source, Copyright Control

Ghana, Mali, and Songhai rose to prominence in succession between the Senegal and Niger Rivers. Each kingdom built on the remnants of the old, and each conquered larger expanses of

territory.[2] Ghana formed around AD 300 and reached its apogee just before the Almoravids (a Moroccan Berber dynasty) invaded between 1054 and 1076 (Onwubiko 1967:13–15; Davidson 1970:83–8). Its successor Mali rose to prominence under the legendary Sundiata in 1230 and dominated the western savannah for two centuries. The third kingdom, the Songhai, endured only 130 years as a great empire (1464 to 1591). Nevertheless, E Jefferson Murphy calls it 'the pinnacle of development for Sudanic civilization' (1972:121).

Each of the three kingdoms developed sophisticated political organizations and advanced civilizations. They were wealthy, and few people went hungry. Some learned to read and write, and most lived in security. Scholars have argued that these civilizations were at times equal or superior to contemporary European civilizations (Davidson 1970:76–80, 92–3; Murphy 1972:83, 90–92; Kryza 2006:xv). Their prosperity rested on commerce, particularly the lucrative trans-Saharan trade in gold ('yellow gold'), salt ('white gold'), and slaves ('black gold'). They became the middlemen for the trade between the peoples of the forest and the peoples of North Africa (Austen 2010:23–32; Bovill 1995:237–40; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:225–33). The Niger River served as a conduit for goods coming from and heading south, and the trans-Saharan camel caravans for goods coming from and heading north. Cities such as Kumbi Saleh, Walata, Jenné, Timbuktu, and Gao developed to facilitate this commerce. Not only were these cities the terminal points for trade, but they also boasted centres of learning where scholarship flourished. The cities also served as centres for the propagation and spread of Islam throughout the Sudan (Levtzion 1976:141–2; Cissoko 2000:43, 143–7; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:223–37).

[2] Scholars dispute whether Songhai was larger than Mali. Unlike Ghana and Mali, its heartland was on the eastern part of the great bend of the Niger River. The territory it conquered extended east and west from there, and may possibly have approached the Atlantic Ocean. See Austen (2010:55–6) and Bovill (1995:140) for further discussion. See also the map on p 33.

2.2 Songhai Sources and Origins

There are some important written and oral sources for Songhai history, but they are limited in comparison with what is available for the same period in Europe (Ba 1977:6–23; Bovill 1995:51; Austen 2010:54). The chief written sources are known as the Tarikh as-Sudan (TS) and the Tarikh al-Fettach (TF), compiled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, respectively (Hale 1990:7–8, 31, 47–54; Sadi 1999; Austen 2010:102). These 'chronicles' were written in Arabic by African scholars living in Timbuktu. Other written sources come from the pens of Muslim travellers, the most famous being Ibn Battuta, who travelled to the 'Sudan' in 1352-3, and Leo Africanus, who visited in the early sixteenth century (Bovill 1995:92–6, 145–8; Gramont 1991:47–50). The oral sources come from the genealogists/musicians ('griots') who form part of this research (Hale 1990:54–8).

Whether written or oral, the sources do not agree on every point, and some details are obscure (Cissoko 2000:155; Monteil 1971:75). It is certain that by the seventh century, groups of what would become the Songhai had migrated to the Great Bend of the Niger River. These people engaged in three occupations: fishing in the Niger River, farming along its banks and tributaries, and hunting in more remote areas. The farmers and hunters lived to the south while the fisher folk migrated north and colonized the area around the modern city of Gao (Murphy 1972:121; Davidson 1970:99; Levtzion 1976:137).

Some scholars believe a group of Berbers invaded from the desert in the eighth century and captured the Songhai capital Kukiya (near the present-day border of Niger/Mali) (Hale 1990:xvi, 7, 22-3, 99). Intermingling with the Songhai, they became the ruling Za dynasty of the emerging Songhai state (Chu & Skinner 1990:81–3; Onwubiko 1967:49; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:189). Other scholars, however, dispute the claim that the first rulers of the Songhai were of mixed race, and there is little hard

evidence for it (Boulnois & Hama 1954:34–5, 43; Trimingham 1962:85). The early rulers were thus descendants of the original Songhai clans, perhaps mixed with some other African peoples.

According to the TS, the Za rulers, with their farming and hunting kin, conquered the northern fishing communities in the eleventh century, moving the capital of the Songhai kingdom to Gao (Davidson 1970:99–100; Sadi 1999; Bovill 1995:132). Songhai came under Mali's control intermittently during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but otherwise Songhai maintained its independence and prospered. A new ruling dynasty, the Sonni, finally threw off the Malian yoke around 1400, but Songhai remained a relatively small, homogeneous state for another fifty years (Murphy 1972:121–2; Ba 1977:36; Villiers & Hirtle 2002:187–9).

2.3 The Zarma

While written and oral sources describing the origin and history of the Songhai are limited, even less has been written or told about the Zarma. Most of what is known comes from oral sources. It is apparent, however, that the Zarma were a separate ethnic group who moved into the region well before the sixteenth century. Beyond that little is known. Many scholars and writers believe they migrated from the west to the area they currently occupy (Rouch 1954b:10; Hale 1990:130–133; Johnson et al. 1997:133). Some Zarma and oral sources dispute this claim and say they arrived from Egypt or Yemen before the Songhai rose to prominence (DA 2014, #XII). Again, many scholars believe that Zarma is a dialect of Songhai, but some Zarma people and oral traditions maintain that the language originated with the Zarma (DA 2014, #XII-D & #XIV; Bornand 2005:57; Olivier de Sardan 1984:273–5, 290).

Whatever the origins of the Zarma and their language, three facts are incontrovertible in the twenty-first century. First, they are the dominant Songhai group with over four million people (Mandryk 2010:39, 637; Joshua Project 2017), nearly

two-thirds of the Songhai population. They live almost exclusively in Niger, where, together with other Songhai groups, they constitute around one quarter of the population and play an important role in government.[3] Second, their language, through intermarriage and close contact, is virtually indistinguishable from Songhai. The question of the language's origin is a superfluous consideration in the contemporary world. Third, the customs and structure of Zarma society closely resemble those of the Songhai. There are few significant differences. Thus, the Songhai and Zarma not only have much in common, but they are also part of the same ethnolinguistic family of peoples (Hale 1990:182; Stoller & Olkes 1987:22).

2.4 The Songhai Empire

The short-lived but powerful Songhai Empire controlled a vast expanse of West Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With the decline of Mali after 1400 and the rise of Sonni Ali Ber to the throne in 1464, the Songhai kingdom began a rapid expansion. Sonni Ali reigned for 28 years, and warfare consumed most of his reign. He was brilliant but brutal, never defeated in battle. He based the strength of his army around a permanent force of cavalry assisted by a professional army of conscripts and a powerful navy of canoes that plied the Niger River transporting supplies and booty (Chu & Skinner 1990:99–100; Cissoko 2000:52; Ba 1977:63–74, 89–90). In quick succession, he defeated the Mossi peoples to the south and the desert-dwelling Tuareg to the north. He occupied the city of Timbuktu and took control of its trade routes and scholarly institutions, executing or exiling many scholars who had opposed him (Bovill 1995:133–7; Mabogunje 1976:20; Hunwick 1976:287–8). Muslims have not had much regard for Sonni Ali. The TS describes him as a cruel and despotic tyrant (Hale 1990:23–4, 76–7). Sonni Ali's actions, however, were likely a deliberate attempt to

[3] Paul Stoller contends that the Songhai/Zarma comprise forty per cent of the population of Niger, but this is not supported by any documentation I can find, nor does it seem reasonable from my personal observation (1989a:173).

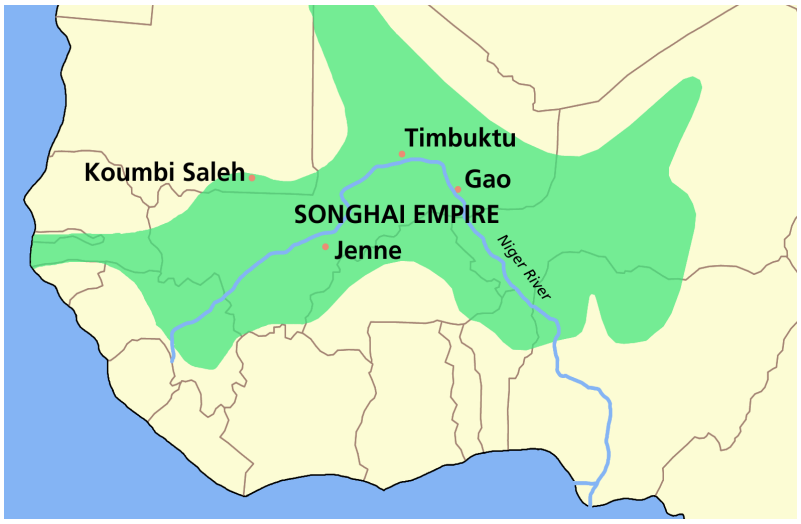
unify disparate peoples: the elite, urban, Islamised population and the numerous rural folk who followed traditional religious beliefs (Onwubiko 1967:50–53, 119–20; Ba 1977:115–30). In later campaigns, Sonni Ali attacked Mali and captured much of its territory. Before his death in 1492, he had fashioned Songhai into a truly great empire, unified, at peace, and strong enough to defend itself from outside threats (Murphy 1972:123).

In 1493, one of Sonni Ali's trusted lieutenants, Muhammad Touré, overthrew Ali's son and formed the Askia dynasty. He was an able administrator, building on the achievements of Sonni Ali. He created a central administration for the government, with a council of ministers at its core, and divided the empire into provinces with appointed governors (Murphy 1972:123; Hunwick 1976:291–2; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:110–12). He decreased the tax burden on commoners and showed favour to Islam, instituting Islamic law throughout the empire and encouraging the development of Islamic scholarship. The three major commercial cities – Gao, Timbuktu, and Jenné – prospered under his rule, and Muslim scholars flocked to these cities, creating medieval-style universities where they taught subjects such as theology, rhetoric, logic, history, geography, philosophy, and law (Trimingham 1962:98; Cissoko 2000:203–18; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:171–2). In 1495-7, he made the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, where he was named the caliph of the Western Sudan (Murphy 1972:124; Hunwick 1976:292; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:114–15).

Like Sonni Ali Ber, Askia Muhammad was a skilful warrior, decisively defeating the ancient Songhai enemies, the Tuareg and the Mossi. He conquered even more territory, pushing the borders of the empire westward towards the Atlantic and eastward towards Agadez, an important mining and commercial town in the desert. By the middle of his reign, the empire had become one of the largest African states in history (Austen

2010:57; Cissoko 2000:97; Bovill 1933:94–7). It was the height of the Songhai Empire (see map 2-3) (Anon 2006).[4]

Askia Muhammad abdicated the throne in 1528, blind, frail, and unable any longer to govern. The Askia dynasty continued throughout the sixteenth century, but only one king, his son Askia Dawud (1549-1583), approached his brilliance and greatness (Chu & Skinner 1990:110; Trimingham 1962:99; Hale 1990:97–116). After Dawud's reign, the Songhai Empire rapidly declined under a succession of weak rulers, internal quarrels, and threats from enemies.



Map 2-3: Approximate Extent of the Songhai Empire At Its Apogee around AD 1500

Source: Wikimedia, Open Source, Copyright Control

The end came quickly. In 1590, four thousand Moroccans, under the direction of a Spanish mercenary named Judar, marched across the Sahara, hoping to seize control of the rich trans-Saharan commerce and the gold fields rumoured to be held by the Songhai. With primitive firearms, the Moroccans on 13 March 1591 defeated an army of up to 40,000 Songhai warriors armed only with spears, swords, and bows (Hunwick 1976:299–301; Austen 2010:49; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:208–13).[5] They captured the

[4] I accessed this map on 16 February 2016 at the following site: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SONGHAI_empire_map.PNG.

[5] There is much confusion about the actual date of this battle, known to historians as the Battle of Tondibi. Some scholars say it occurred on 12 April 1591 (Hale 1990:27–8, 118; Kaké 1976:29). Bovill states that the TS and the TF do not agree on the date, and European translators of ancient texts do not agree on the date, either (Bovill 1995:175n). Other suggested dates are 16 February and 01 March. At any rate, the year 1591 was a major turning point in African history (McIntosh 1998:266; Maiga 2010:9).

cities of Timbuktu and Gao, inflicting heavy casualties on the Songhai and forcing them downriver (Roseberry 1934:155–6; Murphy 1972:125). The promised riches, however, never fully materialized, and the Moroccans found Songhai territory difficult to govern from afar, eventually abandoning the enterprise three decades later. The descendants of the Moroccan soldiers continued to dominate Songhai territory from Timbuktu, but they were unable to maintain control further south than Gao. Some Songhai retreated downriver into what is today Niger, fighting guerrilla warfare until around 1660 (Willis 1976:518; Boulnois & Hama 1954:16; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:218–24). Some descendants of Askia Dawud fled even farther south down the Niger River to present-day Benin, intermingling with the local populations and becoming the ancestors of the present-day Dendi (Onwubiko 1967:68; Fuglestad 1983:35).

2.5 Three Centuries of Decline

The effect of the Moroccan invasion on Songhai was catastrophic. Not only was the empire destroyed, but the major cities were looted and burned. A process of rapid decline set in. Trade across the Sahara and with the forest lands of the south diminished, not only because of the invasion and resulting chaos, but also because Europeans began to develop more efficient and lucrative maritime trade routes along the coast (Murphy 1972:267, 305; Hale 1990:115; Eyre 2000:203). The population of the great cities declined while the universities fell into ruin and decay, their professors forced into exile and their priceless manuscripts destroyed or stolen. Raiding and warfare resulted in desertification and many fields being taken out of cultivation. Disastrous droughts, plagues, and famines stalked the land (Cissoko 2000:215–8; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:224, 230; Trimingham 1962:141–7). The empire broke up into many warring city states and petty kingdoms, with each of the subject peoples declaring independence. Stability across the region deteriorated, and the peace and unity of the glory days melted away

into a semi-permanent state of anarchy and insecurity (Zoumari 1982:77, 84–7, 120; Bovill 1995:183–92; Stoller 2009:80).

The ruin can be overstated.[6] The common people continued to experience life as they had for centuries, and trade up and down the Niger River and across the Sahara continued (Bovill 1995:194–5, 206). Islamic scholarship still exercised some important influence over the former domains of the empire, especially, as Willis argues, through Sufi sects (1976:539, 546–52). Still, the Moroccan invasion effectively put an end to the great civilizations of the Western Sudan. This state of affairs lasted three centuries until the coming of the colonial powers in the late nineteenth century and the imposition of the 'pax latin' by the French (Dubois 1899:147; Murphy 1972:345). During this time, the inland Sudan, which had previously had much contact with the outside world, became more and more isolated and xenophobic (Davidson 1970:121–2; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:232; Fuglestad 1983:110). Sources for the history of the Songhai during this period are almost non-existent, confined to a few Arab reports, some European descriptions, and, most important, oral histories, especially genealogies (Hunwick 1976:265; Kaké 1976:9; Zoumari 1982:6–7, 37). Since there is considerable cultural and economic homogeneity in the states of the West African Sudan, some cautious extrapolation can be done from what is known about other states during this period, but there is precious little to go on. It is known that much of the northern Songhai heartland eventually fell under the domination of their bitter enemies, the Tuareg, in the eighteenth century. Later, in the nineteenth century, the Fulani imposed loose control

[6] Basil Davidson in *The Lost Cities of Africa* (1970:116) argues that the major difference between Europe and Africa from the seventeenth century to the present was the expansion of European civilization and the stagnation of African civilization. While there may be some truth to this argument, it would be easy to extrapolate from this that modern European civilization is superior to modern African civilization, a conclusion that many Europeans drew in the nineteenth century, but which ignores aspects of European-African interaction such as the Atlantic slave trade and the period of colonization. Davidson does add another important point, however: Western Europe did not have any major external invasions after the Viking attacks ended in the tenth century (1970:120). While there were internecine wars, no foreign armies were able to impose their hegemony on the developing Western civilization.

over southern parts of Songhai territory (Willis 1976:534–6; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:226–35; Fuglestad 1983:39–41).

2.6 The Influence of Sunni Islam upon the Songhai

Islam came late to the Songhai. Early in the Islamic era, merchants from North Africa carried the new religion with them across the Sahara. They had a largely peaceful impact, encouraging the royal families to adopt Islam (Trimingham 1962:31–3, 64; Cissoko 1984:77; Austen 2010:41–2). Still, Islam remained little more than a veneer over traditional beliefs. The TS and TF report that the Songhai king Kossoi converted to Islam in AD 1009, and succeeding kings were traditionally Muslims, but they were not deeply attached to the new religion (Trimingham 1962:92; Levtzion 1976:118, 145; Cissoko 1984:85–6). The Sonni dynasty of kings was lukewarm in its attachment to Islam, practicing both it and the traditional religion. Sonni Ali gave lip service to Islam, but the Arab sources say that he often skipped Friday prayers, and the oral histories relate that he was a powerful magician in his own right (Davidson 1966:120–23; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:102–108; Maiga 2010:xx). By the middle of the fifteenth century, many of the wealthier, educated urbanites had adopted Islam. Most of the ruling elite had followed suit by the next century under the influence of Askia Muhammad, who was more devoted to Islam than his predecessors. There was little attempt to force Islam on the masses and subject peoples, however, and they clung tenaciously to their traditional beliefs in spirits and sorcery (Trimingham 1962:97–8; Murphy 1972:99; Austen 2010:87).

After the collapse of the Songhai Empire, many scholars believe there was a decline in Islamic fervour and devotion amongst the Songhai until the nineteenth century (Levtzion 1976:46; Cissoko 2000:98; Bornand 2001:337). Willis (1976), on the contrary, contends that Islam expanded its influence between AD 1600 and 1800. His claims have some merit, especially in what had been the western domains of the empire,

but as Trimingham points out, in the Songhai heartland from Gao south, there seems to be little evidence that Islam gained ground (1962:141–4). Islam had so little influence over this area that even the great Fulani *jihads* across the Sudan in the early nineteenth century had only a marginal effect on many Songhai (Johnson et al. 1997:140–46). It was not until the twentieth century, when the region came under French domination, that Islam won the hearts of the majority (Manning 1988:95–6; Austen 2010:128–32; Masquelier 2001:36).

2.7 European Exploration and Domination

In the late eighteenth century, a great interest in exploring the interior of Africa developed among Europeans. Several geographic societies were founded to explore and conduct scientific research in Africa. One of the earliest, the so-called 'African Association', formed around a dinner table in England in 1788. Two of its aims came to be finding the fabled city of Timbuktu and determining the source, direction, and mouth of the Niger River (Kryza 2006:11–21, 41–3; Gramont 1991:17–24; Bovill 1995:211). The French Geographical Society offered a 10,000 franc prize in 1824 to the first European to visit Timbuktu and return to give a credible report of the city (Chu & Skinner 1990:3). Several explorers tried and failed in the attempt, including Alexander Gordon Laing, an Englishman who reached the city in 1826 but never made it home alive. In 1828 a poor French adventurer, René Caillié, became the first European to deliver an eyewitness account of the city (Roseberry 1934:14; Kryza 2006:xxii, 275-80; Bovill 1995:249). By then it was a shadow of its former self, with a population of about 12,000 people, compared to around 100,000 in its glory days (Kryza 2006:xi, 231-3; Cissoko 2000:160; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:254).

European exploration continued throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in 1884 with the Berlin Conference. In the 'scramble for Africa' which followed, the French, British, Portuguese, Germans, Belgians, and Spanish sliced up the continent

into spheres of influence. Most of the Songhai domains fell under French influence. The French arrived in Timbuktu in 1893 (Murphy 1972:335; Porch 1986:137–42; Gramont 1991:261–4), and by 1905, they were in control of all the territory that came to be known as French West Africa (Porch 1986:ix, 268-72; Chu & Skinner 1990:115). Colonial rule in Songhai territory was brief but brutal, lasting for less than seven decades (Gramont 1991:242–3; Porch 1986:181–97; Fuglestad 1983:125–44).

2.8 Independence

When many West African states gained their independence in 1960, the Songhai people were divided amongst several countries. The vast majority of them ended up in Niger and Mali, but a few wound up in neighbouring countries. During the colonial era, a large number of Songhai migrated to the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) in search of better jobs and living conditions (Fuglestad 1983:87, 124). Since independence, many have also immigrated to major cities like Ouagadougou, Abidjan, Cotonou, and Bamako.

Most of the Songhai people today occupy lands along the Great Bend of the Niger River and its tributaries from Gundam in Mali to Birnin Kebbi in Nigeria. Most live within 100 miles of the Niger River or one of its tributaries and continue to ply their ancient occupations of farming, hunting, and fishing (Boulnois & Hama 1954:17–19; Rouch 1954b:1; Hale 1984:214). Unlike the glory days of the past, however, most are extremely poor, struggling to supply their families with adequate food and housing.

At independence in Niger, the Zarma and their Songhai cousins found themselves holding most of the levers of political power in the new republic. Under colonialism, they had collaborated with the French more than other ethnolinguistic groups, and they had benefitted more from French schooling and largesse (Fuglestad 1983:109, 191; Hale 1990:153). Taking advantage of the power they had gained, they tried to suppress dissent and promote their own people and culture. This state of affairs lasted into the

1990s and led to confrontation with other Nigerien ethnolinguistic groups (Mandryk 2010; Fuglestad 1983:152–3, 191; Masquelier 2001:38–9).

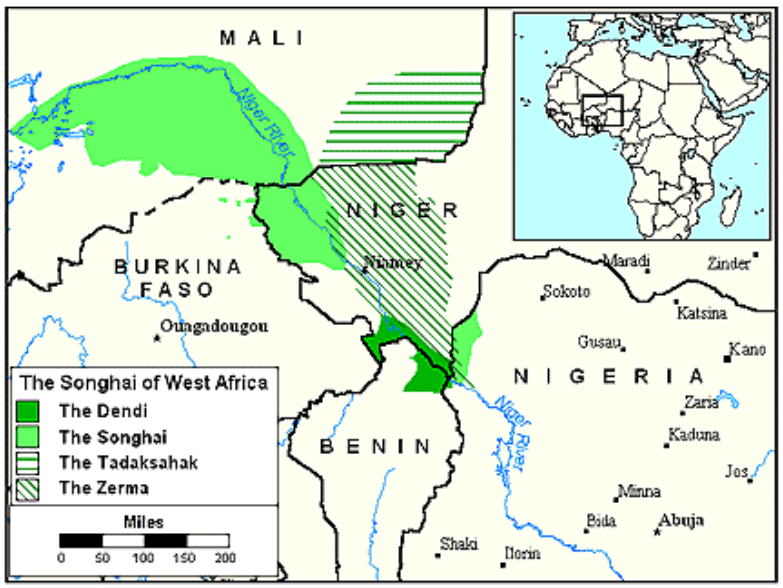
3. Songhai Language and Culture

3.1 Language and Dialects

Besides ethnicity, one principal marker of identity in West Africa is language (Launay 1995:153; Hale 1990:175–6). Songhai is one of only twenty-nine African languages spoken by more than one million people (King 2008a:156 n8). About 6.5 million people speak it as their mother tongue (Joshua Project 2017; Mandryk 2010:39). The language comes from neither the neighbouring Sudanic (West African) nor the Niger-Congo (Bantu) families. Many linguists place it in the Nilo-Saharan language family, but this classification is subject to debate (Lewis et al. 2013; Monteil 1971:75; Rouch 1954b:14–15; Britannica Encylopedia Online 2012). While the language does have affinities with the Nilo-Saharan family in east-central Africa, it also resembles Sudanic languages like Mande and Fulfulde in West Africa and borrows from Hausa.

The word ‘Songhai’ originally referred to the territory from Gao southwards towards the modern city of Niamey and was not used to designate the people until the publication of the TF in the seventeenth century (Zoumari 1982:13). The Songhai today are an ethnically heterogeneous mix of peoples rather than a homogenous, unified ‘tribe’ (Olivier de Sardan 1984:273–4; Maiga & Maiga 1978:7; Trimingham 1962:84). Even though they do not have a cohesive socio-political unity, all Songhai share a common language, history, culture, and geography (Olivier de Sardan 1984:290; Maiga & Maiga 1978:8; Bornand 2001:343).

The Songhai family of peoples is divided into several main dialect groups (see map 2-4) (Bethany World Prayer Center 1997). The largest group, as noted above, is the Zarma, with over 4 million speakers. This dialect is spoken in and around the Nigerien cities of Niamey, Dosso, and Ouallam. Another important group is the Dendi, living



Map 2-4: Four Songhai Dialects

Source: Bethany World Prayer Center, Used by permission

along both sides of the Niger/Benin border. Though small in number (about 300,000), the Dendi dialect is a trade language in northern Benin (Mandryk 2010:147). The Songhai proper live mostly in Mali and northern Niger. They speak one of three major dialects of Songhai, each centred on a large town: Timbuktu, Gao, and Téra. The Gao dialect forms a trade language for northern Mali. The estimated population of this northern group is about 2 million (Mandryk 2010:39; Joshua Project 2017). Finally, there are smaller groups of Songhai who speak separate dialects, notably Tadaksahak and Igdalen, each comprising around 100,000 people. These latter dialects are Songhai-Tamajaq creoles, containing characteristics of both languages. The former is spoken in Mali and the latter near the desert town of Agadez in northern Niger (Lewis et al. 2013).

3.2 Songhai Culture

Though each ethnolinguistic family in the West African Sahel shares a unique language, history, and geography, the structure of these societies is very similar (Hale 1990:18; Tamari 1995:79). Even today, where many distinctions have become blurred, one can recognize the formerly stratified nature of these cultures. As Murphy says, 'Underneath the rapid changes that are sweeping Africa, the ancient values continue to influence African beliefs and behavior.' (1972:408)

The Songhai had three main socio-economic distinctions: the freeborn, the slaves, and the artisans (Bornand 2002:275–6; McIntosh 1998:126; Cissoko 2000:167–70; TB-B 2013, 18:41-19:40).[7] The structure of the society was quite hierarchical and bounded, and regulations were fairly strict. The freeborn people were composed of two groups: the nobles and the common people. The common people descended from the farmers, fisher folk, and hunters of old and outnumbered the nobles, who were the descendants of former kings, warriors, and Islamic scholars. Both groups are designated by the Songhai term *burcin*, which is commonly translated as 'noble' but actually means 'freeborn' or 'non-servile' (Maiga & Maiga 1978:15–16, 31; Tamari 1991:223; McLaughlin 1997:562).

The slaves (*bannya*) were at the bottom of the social ladder. While this class no longer officially exists, it formed an important part of Songhai society until the twentieth century, and even today, the Songhai people can often identify the descendants of former slaves. The slaves were divided into two groups: those born into slavery and those captured in war or bought in trade (Levtzion 1976:138–9; Rouch 1954b:40–41; Garba 1992:74–82). The former category resembled the serfs in Europe during the Middle Ages. They lived all their lives in subservience, performing work for their master while having some limited freedoms. They were generally well-treated but were restricted geographically. Captured or traded slaves enjoyed no such privileges. They could be bought or sold, performed some of the most menial chores, and were less well treated than those born into slavery (Bornand 2004b:89).

[7] Other scholars have reported a similar pattern of social structure amongst neighbouring ethnolinguistic groups such as the Mande, the Wolof, and the Hausa (Durán 2006:224; McLaughlin 1997:562; Tamari 1991:223–9; Charry 2000b:48; Besmer 1983:5).

The artisans constituted a class of people alongside the other two classes. Often they are referred to as 'casted' people.[8] While the term 'caste' may have some value as a designation for people who are set apart and perform specific tasks, the word itself has negative connotations from the context of India and does not clarify the role of the artisans or their importance to society (Hale 1998:196–201). I will therefore not use the term except in citation.

The artisan class is distinguished from the other two by birth, by occupation, and by behaviour (Maiga & Maiga 1978:16; Merriam 1964:123). Tamari (1991:223) calls them 'endogamous ranked specialist groups'. They were 'people who lacked the ability to change their social status at birth' (Akyeampong 2006:123). Even today, many Songhai from the freeborn class would consider it demeaning or taboo to marry someone from the artisan class, and this aspect of social immobility partially explains their perceived inferiority (Hale 1998:201–202; MS1 2010, #III; Women of DA 2013, 10:44-11:16; MN 2012, 31:12-32:16). In addition, they were exempt from military service and could never be captured or killed in battle (Tamari 1991:224; SS 2012, #V-B; AM1 2013, 22:19-23:12).

According to Tamari, the Songhai distinguish up to six artisan groups. She cites the blacksmiths, four groups of professional musicians, and the leather workers (1991:229). Hale, writing from the context of Niger, states that the Songhai have four artisan classes: the blacksmiths, the professional musicians, the carpenters, and the weavers (1998:26; Maiga & Maiga 1978:29–30). Bernard and White-Kaba add the

[8] Quite a number of scholars use the term 'caste' to describe the artisan classes. For a further information see Tamari (1991; 1997) (who uses the word 'caste' in the titles of her articles and books), Murphy (1972:106), Maiga & Maiga (1978:27–30), Ba (1977:152), Bebey (1975:21–4), Levtzion (1976:138), Bernard and White-Kaba (1994:164), Olivier de Sardan (1984:56–8), Garba (1992:15, 20, 71, 93, 106), Willis (1976:524–5), Laye (1954:73), Akyeampong (2006:118, 123–7), and McLaughlin (1997:561–2). Many of my research participants also used the term (see, for example, MG-B 2013, #I; JD 2012, 52:29; GS 2012, 12:09-12:37; HA1 2014, 4:42; TB-B 2013, 18:58; HK 2013, 54:41; 1:00:18; HG2 in Elders 2015, 27:35; SK 2015, 15:33-16:24). By contrast, some recent scholarship has eschewed the term 'caste' and adopted the neutral terms 'artisan' or 'guild' to describe this class of peoples in West African societies. See Durán (2006), Hale (1990; 1998), Conrad & Frank (1995b:ix–x), Austen (2010:108), Launay (1995:165–7), and Bornand (1999; 2001; 2002; 2004b; 2004a; 2005).

leather workers (1994:119), and Rouch (1954b:24) and Garba (1992:87) confirm this, adding the potters, the only artisan group reserved exclusively for women. Whatever the exact number of artisan classes, they do not exceed twenty per cent of the population in any West African society. In some ethnolinguistic groups, the percentage is less than five per cent, and musicians constitute only a fraction of the artisans (Tamari 1991:225). The artisans pass their profession on to their descendants, and traditionally, no one else could do their work (Durán 2006:220; Hale 1998:172; AM1 2013, 27:54-28:33).

In the past, the artisan classes enjoyed a patron-client relationship with the freeborn class (Willis 1976:525; Monteil 1968:781–7; HK 2013, 42:53-43:14). The artisan performed a service or delivered an order to a patron, and the patron was expected to provide him with food, clothing, and shelter in exchange. Often, artisans were attached to noble or powerful families and performed their services almost exclusively for those families (MH2, SI, & HS2 2015, 30:49-31:21). One of the main characteristics of this relationship was that the client always showed deference to the patron, someone of the freeborn class. The artisan had to enhance the reputation of the patron in ways that set off his or her noble qualities. This stance on the part of the artisans is another explanation for their perceived inferiority (Bornand 2002:275–6; Hoffman 1995:43; Keita 1995:196; MN 2012, 48:57-49:09; MD2 2014, #IV-H).

Musicians (*jesere*) were one class of artisans. Known in the scholarly literature and in French as ‘griots’, they acted as a foil to the freeborn class. Even today, the ideal character traits of a freeborn Songhai include modesty, reserve, calmness, generosity, courage, and an avoidance of culturally-defined shameful behaviour (Bornand 2004b:93–4; Stoller & Olkes 1987:14). By contrast, musicians are often viewed as immodest, unrestrained, loud, talkative, greedy, crafty, and shameless. They may break taboos that restrict freeborn people, and, in so doing, earn their contempt. This

behaviour is another reason why ‘respectable’ people look down on them as inferior (Bornand 2005:96–108; Hale 1998:121, 175; MB2 in GZ 2013, #VII-B).

In the early twenty-first century, artisans occupy an ambiguous social position in Songhai society (Bornand 2004b:103; Nketia 1974:35). While people acknowledge that they help maintain the social, political, and economic fabric of society, they are often seen as beggars (Conrad & Frank 1995a:1–14). Furthermore, there still exists a fairly strong stratification in society even though slavery and social typing are officially abolished (Garba 1992:81–4; DA 2014, #XX; AB 2013, 22:11-23:04). Most of the *burcin* class still regard artisans and descendants of slaves as of lower class. My research participants often referred to musicians as ‘slaves’ (BK1 & GA 2012, 22:55-23:50; Women of DA 2013, 8:38-9:12; AS 2013, 21:13-22:00). Others pointed out, however, that the oral tradition speaks of their noble origin, especially those who tell epics and recite genealogies (TB-B 2013, 35:08-36:57; JD 2012, 53:13-56:06; DA 2014, #XVI & #XVII; Maiga & Maiga 1978:19–22). Whatever their origin, however, they are looked down on by the free-born as ‘rascals’ and as socially inferior (MS1 2010, #III; GS 2012, 45:20-46:22; IH 2014, 32:25-32:50).

Songhai society is patrilineal and polygamous, with the oldest son receiving the largest share of the inheritance (Chu & Skinner 1990:8–11; Stoller 1989a:45–7; MB1 2012, 36:08-36:40). A typical household consists of a man and his wife or wives, their adult male children with their wife/wives, and the grandchildren, all occupying the same space. There will usually be a separate house for each adult male child and his family on a common, walled compound. Unlike the nomadic Fulani and Tuareg or even the neighbouring sedentary Gurmancé, the Songhai prefer to cluster in larger towns and villages, leaving the smaller hamlets and rural areas to other ethnolinguistic groups (La

Violette 1995:172).[9] In fact, the northern Songhai sometimes call their language *koyraboro senni*, which literally means 'language of the townspeople' (Joshua Project 2017; Maiga 2010:89).

Most Songhai are dependent on their farms or fishing for daily sustenance. In many areas, rains are insufficient to keep the average family fed for a full year. Still, life revolves around the annual rainy season (June-September) and the key rites of passage: birth/naming, marriage, and death. There are also the annual Muslim festivals (especially *Eid-al-Fitr* and *Eid-al-Adha*) and occasional events like the crowning of a chief or the election of a new deputy to the country's parliament.

4. Songhai Music

In this section, I will first explain the reasons for the limited knowledge about Songhai music. Then I will outline the history and the two main types of traditional Songhai music. I will leave the questions of song genres, indigenous instruments, and the role of musicians for Chapter Five.

4.1 Limited Knowledge about Songhai Music

While little is known about the Songhai outside Africa, even less is known about their music. This is probably due to several factors, all of which are important for understanding the direction music has taken in Songhai culture since colonial times.

First, the sources for a history of Songhai music are meagre (Garba 1992:12). This is true of African musics in general, but it is even more true for Songhai music (Farmer 1939:569).

Second, the Songhai live in a remote, isolated area of Africa, far from the coast. As a result, over the past five hundred years, they have had less contact with and access to the outside world than other West African cultures. Until the late nineteenth century, Europeans had little contact with Africans in the interior of the continent. Some West

[9] See also Murphy (1972:96), who says the same about the Mande peoples of Mali and Guinea and applies their culture to some of the other West African societies.

African musicians, musical instruments, and songs have become famous internationally, but most of these originate from cultures nearer the coastal regions.

Third, as Bensignor states, the music of Nigerien cultures lies in the shadow of the great West African musical cultures (2006:280). The Mande, in particular, are a larger, more widely distributed group. Mande culture birthed the 'griots' (TH 2010, #III), and it boasts a wider variety of musical instruments. Two such instruments are the *balafon*, a type of xylophone, and the *kora*, a 21-string harp-lute. Neither of these instruments is found in traditional Songhai culture (Erlmann 2005:906; Hale 1998:12; Durán 2006:225–6; DH & MH1 2014, 13:55-14:16). All this makes the neighbouring societies more interesting to Westerners and musicologists.

A fourth reason for the relative lack of knowledge about Songhai music is the strong influence of Islam in Niger (Eyre 2000:200–202; Durán 2006:23; Garba 1992:13, 99). There is a powerful undercurrent of opposition to music in Nigerien Islam that has contributed to a rapid decline of indigenous music in the latter half of the twentieth century (AB 2013, 58:25-1:02:21). In particular, The Songhai social and ceremonial music performed by the *jesere* has faced formidable opposition from Muslim scholars, who view it as exaggerations, fabrications, and lies, and many musicians have abandoned the trade as a result (Bornand 2001:341–3; Corbitt 1998:34).

Fifth, the traditional patrons that supported musicians, the nobles and freeborn people, have lost much of their influence and wealth, and many artisans have either renounced the profession or been forced to supplement their income through farming, fishing, or commercial pursuits. The lack of recognition on the world stage has meant that the Songhai have had less access to funding sources that have benefitted other West African musicians. As a result, many musicians have had trouble adapting to the changing realities of the modern world (Monteil 1968:592).

4.2 History of Songhai Music

4.2.1 Early References to Music

Most of the rare early references to music amongst the Songhai come from the time of the empire. The writers of the TS and the TF note, for example, that the Askia kings (1493-1591) had royal musicians and embellished the Songhai court with musical instruments and ceremonies (Dubois 1899:133, 135; Sadi 1999:xlvii–xlviii, 116, 126; Tamari 1995:83n 28). While these are the first written sources for music amongst the Songhai, it must have existed before the sixteenth century. For one thing, there are oblique references to music in the court of the Songhai kings before the time of the empire (Farmer 1939:570–73). Maïga and Maïga assert that some form of drumming and dancing existed as early as the Za dynasty (1978:5). For another, the oral tradition mentions music in the court of Askia Muhammad and his predecessors (Hammadou 1977:9). The TS and the TF indicate an already well-developed musical profession, and Garba claims that Sonni Ali Ber played a musical instrument (1992:94). Also, Arab chroniclers such as Ibn Battuta and al-Umari described musicians flourishing in the court of Mali in the fourteenth century (Hamdun & King 1975:37–41; Hale 1998:1, 316; Villiers & Hirtle 2007:85). Mali exerted a strong influence on Songhai, and the latter would have known of Malian music even if they did not develop their own musical system until later.

Another clue to the origins of Songhai music is the origin of the *jesere*. There is an obvious connection between this class of artisans and the Ghana Empire. The Songhai term *jesere* has obvious links to the Soninké[10] word, *gesere*. Moreover, the Songhai *jesere* often use archaic forms of the Soninké language in their ballads and epic poems (Hale 1990:64–5; Maiga & Maiga 1978:32). In addition, many Songhai musicians claim descent from the Soninké. Tamari concludes that the Songhai *jesere*

[10] Soninké is the language of the people who controlled the Ghana Empire. It is related to other modern languages in the Mande family group such as Malinke, Mandinka, Jula, and Bamana.

clan could not have developed any later than 1500, and music certainly existed amongst the Songhai well before that (Tamari 1991:234–46; Cissoko 2000:168).

4.2.2 After the Empire

There are few references to Songhai music in any literature, oral or written, from the early seventeenth century until the colonial era (Farmer 1939:574). This lack of sources makes it very difficult to establish what Songhai music looked like during this period. Since there are many similarities between Songhai culture and other cultures in the Sahel, however, one can get some general impressions of its form and practice from the testimony of passing European explorers, traders, soldiers, and civil servants (Murphy 1972:102). In addition, oral histories make occasional allusions to music. The references to African music in European writings are limited in scope and coloured by Western preconceptions, often depicting musicians disparagingly as bards, clowns, or even despised Jews (Hale 1998:73, 81–98; Monteil 1968:771–7). For example, Victor Hugo, in his novel *Bug-Jargal*, written in 1818, paints a picture of West African musicians from second-hand sources that tends to sensationalize and caricature them (1970:109–116; Hale 1998:247). Later, the French wrote about 'griots' at the 1893 Battle of Niafunké in a similar manner (Gramont 1991:263). Still, though the information available is sketchy and uneven, there seems to have been a remarkable continuity between the music of the Songhai Empire and Songhai music at the dawn of the colonial era, with a professional class of musicians and similarities between musical instruments and genres of the two eras.

4.2.3 The Twentieth Century to the Present

By the beginning of the colonial era, more written literature about the cultures of West Africa began to appear. There was still very little information about Songhai music in particular, but there were more general references to musicians of West Africa (Hale 1998:107–13). Under the rule of the Europeans, local musical traditions suffered as

Africans adopted new forms of music from the outside and began to flock to the cities, where there was more European influence (Manning 1988:176). During the latter part of the colonial era, one French ethnographer, Jean Rouch, studied the liturgical music of the Songhai. He is still famous in Niger today even though he conducted much of his research in the 1940s and 1950s (Stoller 1989a:151, 160; Fuglestad 1983:128–30; Rouch 1996).

Immediately after independence, the countries of Guinea and Mali embarked on a system of state support for the arts, creating national music and dance troupes and musical training centres (Bender 1991:1–9; Eyre 2000:75; Hale 1998:273). In contrast, the new Republic of Niger restricted the arts by forcing them to serve the interests of the state, offering little musical training, validation, or financial support for musicians. Moreover, the Songhai/Zarma exploited their political dominance in the new government to their advantage. Banning all opposition, they set about creating their own brand of nationalism based on their cultural heritage. Musicians became largely an arm of state promotion and propaganda, often disregarding their cultural role and heritage. The self-promotion and corruption of the regime angered other ethnolinguistic groups and also many Songhai/Zarma. When the government seemed incapable of handling a drought in 1974, the military stepped in and overthrew the civilian regime (Garba 1992:62, 185–209).

Under the regime of General Seyni Kountché (1974-1987), himself a Zarma, there was a harsh reaction against the trivialization of ceremonial music during the previous regime (Alidou 2005:101; Garba 1992:189–208; HM2 2015, 25:50-26:22). The new government banned musicians from being used as promoters and spokespersons of government officials. The idea was to reassert the value of local traditions and return musicians to their traditional roles and places in society. So many changes had occurred

to music in the twentieth century, however, that this was nearly impossible (Garba 1992:63–4).

During these years, some of the traditional music-culture was lost, neglected, or discarded (Garba 1992:19). Many musicians, afraid of offending the government, abandoned the profession. Recordings of traditional music made under the French or in the early years of independence were destroyed or languished in hot, dusty libraries, rendering them useless. Some claim Kountché's policies amounted to a censorship of the arts (Alidou 2005:101). Others say that Kountché worked hard to revitalize and reassert the value of traditional culture and the arts (MG-B 2013, #IV; Elders 2015, #IV-B-11). Whatever the case, his policies have not restored music to a position of prominence (Eyre 2000:75; Durán 2006:227; Alidou 2005:101).

Since Kountché's death in 1987, there has been a liberalization of policy and politics. The 1990s saw an easing of tension with respect to the arts, society, and the media, especially after the Baule conference in France in 1990 (Savès 2011). The new Nigerien government tried to look at music as a way to unite cultures. It started a competitive music festival and a Centre for Musical Training and Promotion (*Centre de Formation et de Promotion Musicale*: CFPM). Popular musicians and bands became less frowned upon (Garba 1992:206–207; Bensignor 2006:281–3). Still, music and the arts do not have an easy road in Nigerien society. Garba quotes Néré Tchakou who says, 'The musician benefits from much respect and consideration elsewhere in the world, but that is far from being the case in Niger where he is trivialized, marginalised, and his most elementary rights undervalued.' (1992:146–7, my translation)

4.3 Types of Traditional Songhai Music

4.3.1 Liturgical Music

One main type of traditional Songhai music is related to the cultic practices of the 'religion of the land' (Bornand 2005:122, 135; Garba 1992:102, 127). For this reason, I

will call it ‘liturgical music’, even though the term may conjure up images of cathedrals and organs. The origins of this music are obscure, but it complements the traditional belief system of the Songhai, encompassing spirits who control the forces of nature and the sources of power and illness. This music may have emerged as a protest against the increasing Islamisation of the Sahel region under Askia Muhammad (Zoumari 1982:136). It is well-documented that the traditional religion spawned a protest movement and related music called the *Hauka* against French colonial power in 1925 (Fuglestad 1983:117; Olivier de Sardan 1984:276–85; Stoller 1989a:148–54, 160–63).

The main type of liturgical music accompanies the religious rite known as the *fooley* (‘madness’). It is often mentioned in the scholarly literature (see Rouch 1996; Surugue 1972; Stoller 1989a; Olivier de Sardan 1984:276–85). The rite also exists amongst the Hausa people, where it is known as *ɓoori* (Besmer 1983; Masquelier 2001; Rouch 1996:320). The *fooley* ceremony involves songs and music played by specific kinds of consecrated instruments. Each spirit in the Songhai pantheon is invoked through its own set of melodies and rhythms (HK 2013, 33:01-33:31; AM1 2013, 10:29-10:42; ZB 2013, 6:59-7:28). The cult adepts dance to the accompaniment of the songs, and the tempo of the music increases until they (there are often a preponderance of female adepts) are possessed by the spirit in question. The Songhai say that the spirit is ‘riding’ the person as its ‘horse’ (Rouch 1996:74, 156–7; Stoller 1989a:118; Surugue 2004:720; BK2 2013, 7:56-8:26). The spirit then communicates a message through the adept. Many cities and towns in Songhai country still have possession troupes.

4.3.2 *Jesere* Music

Perhaps the most important, if not the most common, type of traditional Songhai music is that of the hereditary, professional class of artisans known as the *jesere* (Hale 1990:179–80). The profession encompasses many roles that would not necessarily go together in Western cultures. Though some *jesere* sing and play musical instruments,

they are not primarily musicians. Rather, they are artisans of the spoken word. Music is secondary to their role as masters of the word (Hale 1998:16–17, 146; Bornand 2002:275; AM1 2013, 30:26-30:38). Even this brief description is inadequate to fully comprehend their profession, however. They are the historians, storytellers, entertainers, and spokespersons for the Songhai people. In the past, the *jesere* would serve as diplomats and heralds for government officials or exhort Songhai warriors to courage and bravery in battle (Bornand 1999:291–4; Bender 1991:17–19; Hale 1998:19–56; HM3 & AI2 2016, 22:06-22:17).

No single English word could serve as a synonym for the word *jesere* because of the multiple roles implied by the Songhai word. The English word 'musician' is only a partial synonym because it does not correspond to all the functions of the *jesere*. Some functions, like retelling poems, tales, or epics, do not even involve music. Nevertheless, the *jesere* had a monopoly on certain forms of ceremonial music in traditional Songhai society, and it is difficult to separate their verbal art from their music (Hale 1998:16–9, 143, 146–7; MB1 2012, 32:42-33:07). By custom, a noble or free-born man would not 'lower himself' to sing or play instruments (IB & BB 2013, 9:51-10:08; AS 2013, 18:32-19:20; MN 2012, 10:32-10:51). TB told me that 'it is difficult to see a noble sing or … play an instrument … In Zarma society, the master is the master.' (2013, 43:12-43:38) Another research participant told me that he does not know how to sing or make music because it was taboo for him to do so (MB1 2012, 29:03-30:25).

A global term used to describe the *jesere* class in several West African societies is 'griot' (hereafter without inverted commas). Angela Impey says a griot is an 'itinerant poet-musician who remains the custodian of historical and cultural knowledge' (2000:128; GS 2012, 11:33-12:03). Eric Charry defines griots as 'western Africa hereditary professional musician-verbal artisans whose calling in life is fundamental to the ethnic identity of their people' (2000b:109). He lists nine ethnolinguistic groups

with griots (2000b:108–109) while Hale (1998:10) mentions fifteen. Of French origin, the word was applied by early European explorers to describe the class of professional musicians and historians they encountered (Hale 1998:84–111; Monteil 1968:771–7). The use of this term has some disadvantages. One is that many Africans dislike it as a foreign imposition. They prefer local terms that exist in their own languages. The government of Niger even tried to replace the word in 1981 (Hale 1990:41–3; Garba 1992:21–5; MG-B 2013, #III-D-2). Also, early European explorers and writers portrayed griots in derogatory ways, and, as a result, the word took on pejorative connotations. Another disadvantage of the word is its ambiguity. It does not convey a real understanding of the profession to many outsiders.

There are two main advantages to using the word, however. First, it would be confusing to outsiders to use all the various local terms for griot when one term would suffice to describe them all. Also, the word helps some Africans in different ethnolinguistic groups connect and communicate with each other. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the term griot has been embraced by the African diaspora, particularly in the United States, as a badge of honour and identity (Hale 1998:14–16; McLaughlin 1997:578; Garba 1992:103ff.). There is even a website (http://thegrio.com/) which highlights the lives of prominent African-Americans. The publication of Alex Haley's *Roots* in 1976 popularized the term griot in North America. Though scholars have challenged the authenticity of his book, Haley got some of his information from a griot in The Gambia (Hale 1998:245–7; Haley 2007:870–77).

In this thesis, I will prefer the local term *jesere* over the term griot. Since I am studying a specific people, I prefer to use their word for the profession. There are variant spellings of the word (see the glossary), but I will use *jesere*, unless it occurs in citation. I will use the term griot only in citations, when the wider literature refers to it, or when I refer to the profession in West Africa in general.

4.3.3 Other Types of Traditional Music

There are other types of traditional Songhai music which I will treat in more depth in Chapter Five. Most are related to celebrations like weddings, festivals, or youth dances. In addition to the traditional Songhai music, modern musics like rap, jazz, and reggae have become very popular amongst youth and in urban areas, and Nigerien bands have put their own stamp on these genres by using traditional instruments or playing guitars and drums in an African style.

5. Music and the Songhai Church

5.1 History of Christianity amongst the Songhai

Christian missionaries reached the area where the Songhai live in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Christian and Missionary Alliance arrived in Timbuktu in 1924 and the Evangelical Baptist Mission (EBM) opened their first station in Niamey shortly thereafter (Roseberry 1934:145–54, 252). By the early 1930s, there were a few Songhai Christians, and by the late 1940s, small worshipping groups were meeting in various riverine towns like Timbuktu, Gao, and Niamey (Roseberry 1934:86, 88, 91–5, 122, 154–9, 252; DeValve 2008). Today, most of the churches amongst the Songhai are confined to major towns and cities along the Niger River and its tributaries. Many of the churches are small and heterogeneous, composed of people from several ethnolinguistic groups (DeValve 2008). Christianity has seen slow growth amongst the Songhai since it was first introduced into the area, but the numbers are small. The total number of Protestant Christians amongst the Songhai does not exceed 10,000 (Mandryk 2010:39, 564, 637–9; Joshua Project 2017)

5.2 Development of Songhai Christian Hymnody

There are very few sources for the story of Christian hymnody amongst the Songhai. Mahaman Garba, a Nigerien ethnomusicologist, classes Christian music as a foreign import to Niger in the 1960s (1992:149–53). The origins of that music go back before

the 1960s to the first missionaries, however. As in other places, the missionaries brought their hymns, translated the words, and bequeathed them to the Songhai with tunes they knew (Kidula 2008b:34; Nketia 1974:15; DA 2014, #I-A). Since most of the early missionaries in Niger came from North America, many of the tunes originated from that continent. One valuable resource that I discovered during my research was the *Zarma Baytu Tira* (*Zarma Songbook*) (AA et al. 1994) used by several churches in Niger. All the songs in this book are in Zarma. One of the indices in the back of the book lists the authors (translators) of the songs. Of the 151 songs in the hymnbook, 89 are attributed to early missionaries, including seventeen to Joe McCaba, the founder of EBM. I heard several songs during my observations which are attributed to McCaba. One was the hymn 'Bring Them In', written by Alexcenah Thomas and William A Ogden in the 1880s (Carmichael et al. 1976, #224). The Zarma version can be heard at the following link: http://bit.ly/2kTK2dX. Many of the songs introduced by the early missionaries continue to be a part of the repertoire in Songhai/Zarma churches today. Other tunes and songs have been borrowed from neighbouring African cultures, but very few of the tunes or songs have been created from within the Songhai community using traditional instruments (HK 2013, 52:17-54:24; TB-B 2013, 1:06:51-1:07:35).

When I asked the participants in this research why they thought the missionaries did not try to use indigenous tunes and words in songs, they replied that their priority was to proclaim the gospel. Because they were preoccupied by many issues, they could not focus on culture. They were concerned about the possibility of syncretism if they used indigenous forms. In the process, they trampled on the culture, and African theologians later had to defend cultural traditions from missionary misunderstandings (TB-B 2013, 51:02-53:45; MD1 2014, #I). These observations mirror the accounts of missionaries written during the colonial era. For example, R S Roseberry, a superintendent of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the 1930s, reports on the

first Tuareg believer in Timbuktu. A fellow Tuareg had said to this man, 'Surely God has taken the Tuareg out of you.' Roseberry then comments, 'We do not know of a better testimony than this, [sic] that could be given of any one. These wild men had been a law unto themselves until the French occupation, and many of them were noted for their cruelty and wickedness.' (1934:153) One comment I heard from a research participant is that Africans were taught that everything in their culture was bad and that their music was unsuitable for worship. Some Africans still hold to this understanding of their cultural practices (TB-B 2013, 47:16-49:01; Nketia 1974:14–19). It is easy to criticize the missionaries for their obvious paternalism and ethnocentrism. They lived in a particular time dominated by a particular worldview. Not everything they introduced was harmful, however, and they did not simply reject all African culture. In the same book already quoted, Roseberry speaks favourably of the Harrist churches in Côte d'Ivoire and their indigenous forms of music (1934:160–4).

Until the early 1990s, the only officially recognized Protestant churches in Niger were associated with the missions EBM and SIM. These mission churches were somewhat reserved in their musical practices and discouraged most dancing and traditional instruments. After the Conference of the Baule (France) in 1990, which promoted democratisation and liberalization in Francophone countries, a flood of new, mainly Pentecostal groups, entered the country (dan Karami 2016; Savès 2011; Elders 2015, 42:40-44:35). They were led by the Assemblies of God, which had established a strong base in Burkina Faso starting in 1919 (Roseberry 1934:252). These groups brought a dynamic, exuberant element to the worship scene in Niger. They imported songs and choruses which included lots of repetition. Some of these have been translated into Zarma. One of these, 'Ensemble Louons le Seigneur' ('Let's Praise the Lord Togther'), can be heard at the following link: http://bit.ly/2mk4GB1. They also brought in less restrained dance styles. Their songs and dances had a powerful effect on

the older mission churches, which gradually began to adopt and adapt to a more charismatic style of singing and worship. I will treat the subject of worship music in Songhai/Zarma churches more in depth in Chapter Six.

6. Conclusion

This chapter gives necessary background information to the subject of the research: the Songhai people. The Songhai have an illustrious history. They are a people with deep roots in the soil of West Africa and are justifiably proud of the great civilization and culture developed by their ancestors. The fact that they are poor and marginalised today does not negate their importance to Africa or to the world. They have much to contribute to our understanding of both the past and the present.

Unfortunately, many Songhai do not have a favourable attitude towards their rich musical heritage. Under the onslaught of Euro-American Christianity, Islam, and globalization, many of their traditions are neglected or rejected. What is their unique contribution to the body of world musics? What is the role of their traditional music in the modern world? Furthermore, what role is there for traditional music in the life of Songhai Christians? How does one express both a Christian and a Songhai identity in worship? How does one determine an appropriate style of worship? These questions are the subject of the remainder of this thesis. First, however, I will explain the contributions of ethnomusicology and liturgical studies to my research (Chapter Three) and then the methodology used to examine my research questions (Chapter Four).

Chapter Three: Ethnomusicology & Liturgical Study

1. Introduction

There are two academic disciplines in particular which provide a foundation for this thesis: ethnomusicology and liturgical/worship study. In this chapter, I will discuss the important literature in each discipline and examine the impact they have on this research. In the process, I will also summarize how this research can contribute to the academic conversation within both. First, I will present some background information on grid/group cultural theory and outline its main ideas. Then I will give an overview of ethnomusicology: its origin; its components; and how it relates to worship, culture, change, and the mission context. Next, I will examine liturgical study, including a definition of worship, some theological thoughts on worship, and how worship relates to culture and to identity. Finally, I will explore the topic of worship music in the Songhai context.

2. Grid/Group Cultural Theory

In this thesis, I will rely on Mary Douglas' grid/group cultural theory as a frame to examine the question of musical identities and choices amongst the Songhai. In the late 1960s, Douglas proposed this theory to explain cultural similarities and differences, arguing for a 'typology of cultures based on people's need for classification' (1999; 2003; 2007:2). The theory expands on the one-dimensional, Weberian dichotomy between markets and bureaucracies and the Durkheimian contrast between personal freedom and social solidarity (Bascom 2013:17; Caulkins 1999:111). Douglas proposed a model of 'cultural bias' with two dimensions: social organization and regulation (1999:411–12). Social organization, or 'group', is the bonding which enables the pattern of shared values in a given community. This bonding may be strong or weak depending on the group. In a strong group the concerns of the individual are less important than

those of the group. Conversely, in a weak group, individuals can assert themselves and have a semblance of freedom from the group (Douglas 2007:2–3; Tovey 2004:34). Regulation is the amount of control accepted by group members, what Douglas calls 'grid' (2007:2–3). Grid, or 'control mechanisms' (Geertz 1973:44–6), concerns the cosmology of the group, or control over the system of classification (Tovey 2004:34–5). In a weak grid, individuals have their own control mechanisms. By contrast, strong grid describes a culture with a shared classification system. D Douglas Caulkins explains the two dimensions this way:

> The concept of group addresses identity (Do I belong to an existing social unit or do I shape my own social network?), whereas grid addresses behavior (Is my social situation hedged by extensive rules or am I free to negotiate my own behavior?). (1999:110)

Mary Douglas further describes grid/group theory this way: 'Put the two dimensions together, group and regulation, you get four opposed and incompatible types of social control, and plenty of scope for mixing, modifying or shifting in between extremes.' (2007:3) These four different types of 'cultural bias' can be plotted on an x-y diagram thus:

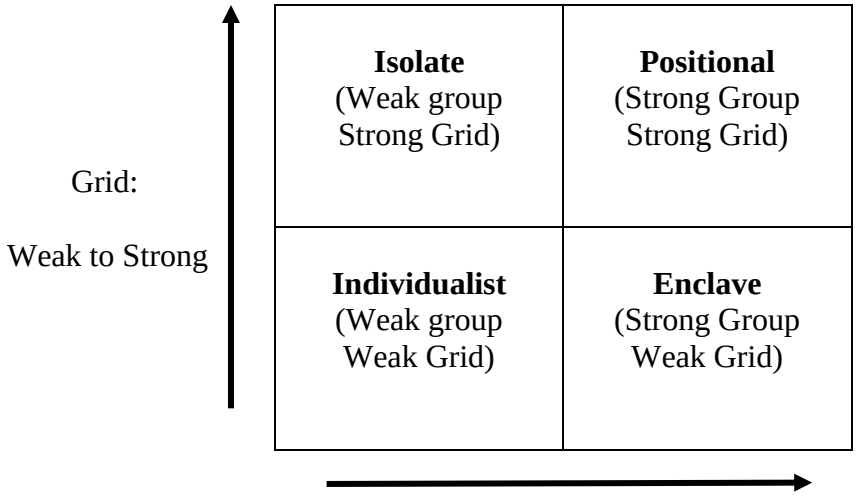


Table 1-1: The Grid/Group Typology

Douglas does not argue that there are only four types of cultural organization, but that the four are enough to explain the bias of all cultures and that 'there are only four stable

organizational forms, the remaining possible mixtures are assumed by the theory to be transitional' (1999:411). She calls each type a culture or a subculture and states that all four are usually present within any community, with one type being dominant (1999:412–13). The Songhai traditional culture, as presented in the last chapter, would fall in the positional quadrant of the diagram because of its strong hierarchy and group boundaries and its regulated codes of social interaction and conduct.

Dougals modified her conception of grid/group theory at least twice during her lifetime. The diagram and the explanation of the theory I am using comes from an article written just before she died in 2007 and thus represents the last permutation of her theory. While I read her seminal work, *Natural Symbols*, my understanding of cultural theory comes mainly from the 2007 article and another one written in 1999 (2007; 1999; 2003).

Scholars have applied grid/group cultural theory to communication, education, leadership, political science, risk perception, migration, religious studies, and other fields of study (Caulkins 1999:109, 115; Douglas 1999:413). To my knowledge, however, only Phillip Tovey has referred to it in the context of worship practices (2004:34–6), and only Paul Richards (2009) has applied it to the subject of ethnomusicology. I will return to grid/group theory and its application to Songhai music in Chapter Seven. In the intervening chapters, I will present my data and amass evidence to analyse identities and musical preferences amongst Songhai Christians, using the theory as a scaffolding to problematize the data.

3. Ethnomusicology

3.1 What is Ethnomusicology?

3.1.1 Definition

Jaap Kunst coined the term 'ethnomusicology' in the 1950s to describe the study of non-Western musics (Kunst 1974; King 2000:327; Rice 2014:3, 7). Defining the term

this way is problematic and has become the subject of debate amongst scholars. The original meaning has ethnocentric undertones because it would, for example, exclude the study of European music by non-Europeans (Agawu 2003:153). Moreover, ethnomusicology is a European term based on a Western concept of music. It is thus ethnocentric by definition. Jean Kidula, an African musicologist, maintains that ethnomusicological research has often been defined and implemented by outsiders using Euro-American standards and approaches. Most scholars who have studied African music are not African and use approaches that make music seem like a museum piece or a cultural artefact rather than a live art form with intrinsic value (2006:99–104; Agawu 2003:165–9).

Another problem with the term is that ethnomusicology overlaps with the disciplines of musicology, anthropology, and linguistics. If the aim of ethnomusicology is 'the study of other musics', this is a goal shared with musicology, and it still has racial and cultural implications (Nettl 1980:1–2). To say that ethnomusicology is the study of 'music in culture'[1] also poses problems because both anthropology and musicology share similar aims (Nettl 2005:6; Merriam 1960:109; Nketia 1962:3). Defining it as some form of sound communication places it in a similar category to linguistics (Nettl 2005:25; Merriam 1964:6; Feld 1974). These and other issues have led some scholars to debate the usefulness of the term. Some have advocated eliminating it altogether (Titon 2008:36–7; Agawu 2003:152–5; Nettl 2010:56).

What, then, is the point of a term such as 'ethnomusicology'? Is it useful as the name for a separate discipline, or is it only a subset of another discipline? To answer these questions, it will be useful to look at some contemporary definitions of the word. John Blacking defines it as 'a study of the different musical systems of the world'

[1] This is Alan Merriam's definition for 'ethnomusicology' in his groundbreaking article in *Ethnomusicology* in September 1960.

(1973:3). This moves away from the ethnocentric meaning of the original definition and toward a comprehensive denotation of the term without reference to the origin of the researcher. This definition does not distinguish it much from musicology, however, and leaves one wondering why the prefix ethno- is needed. Nettl states that it is descriptively accurate to define ethnomusicology as the study of non-Western and folk music by Western scholars since the bulk of the world's ethnomusicologists in the twentieth century were from Europe or North America (2005:4). Other definitions include those of Chenoweth and Bee – 'the study of the musical practices of a particular people' (1973:9–10) – and Lotrecchiano – 'the study of human beings and their belief system as evidenced through sound and movement' (1997:115–16). They are similar to J H Kwabena Nketia's definition: 'the study of music as a universal aspect of human behaviour' (1962:1). All three of these definitions add a behavioural component to the meaning, but the first is not far removed from Blacking's definition and retains some racial undertones, while the second and third link it more to anthropology and linguistics. Roberta King defines ethnomusicology simply as the study of music 'in relation to the life events of a people' (2004:295). This is helpful, but it could exclude some Western musics, where music is often confined to a concert hall or stage and may be divorced from other 'life events'. In a later work, she defines it simply as 'the study of music and culture' (2008a:13).

There is no completely satisfactory definition of ethnomusicology (Nettl 1980:1), but I would combine elements of these definitions to build an inclusive concept that has broad application without many pejorative connotations. Ethnomusicology is the study of particular musical systems of the world, which includes: the conceptualization of music; the roles and functions of music; the settings and cultural and life events during which music takes place; the artefacts, sounds, and rhythms associated with music; the people who perform and participate in music; and the behaviours associated with

music[2]. This will be my working definition of the term in the thesis and will form an outline of my presentation of Songhai music.

3.1.2 Branches

Before the 1950s, ethnomusicology was called 'comparative musicology', and the discipline was more of a comparison of world musics and a search for universals in music (Lotrecchiano 1997:108–109; Nettl 2005:7, 36; Chenoweth 1999). Since then, there have been two main approaches to the study of ethnomusicology: the ethnological and the musicological (King 2000:327; Merriam 1975:57; Cooley & Barz 2008:10–11). The former emphasizes the social sciences; the latter, the humanities. The proponents of each approach have sometimes been at odds. The first approach is often identified with such scholars as Alan Merriam (1964:6), John Blacking (1973:ix), J H Kwabena Nketia (1974), and Stephen Feld (1974:207). The second approach is exemplified by Mantle Hood (1997:110), George List (1979:2–3), Klaus Wachsmann (2004), and Kofi Agawu (2003:149).

The two branches of ethnomusicology should not be set in opposition. The term itself contains the roots ethnology and musicology. Furthermore, contemporary scholars often use a combination of the two approaches to the discipline, and an integrated approach is most useful in Africa (Nketia 1962:1). Many now recognize that both branches of ethnomusicological study are important, and that scholars need to examine both the emic and the etic aspects of the world's musical cultures (Merriam 1964:18–25; Cooley & Barz 2008:11). Jon Michael Spencer, for example, says that ethnomusicology is musicology as an anthropologically informed discipline (1991:12, 161). Martin Stokes (1994a:vii) adds that theories of ethnicity influence

[2] For an even fuller definition, see the entry 'Ethnomusicology' by Mary McGann in the volume *Worship Music: A Concise Dictionary* (2000:107).

ethnomusicological scholarship. In short, ethnomusicology is an interdisciplinary discipline.

Alan Merriam, in his ground-breaking monograph *The Anthropology of Music*, suggested that ethnomusicology is more than just the study of sounds and embraces the total way of life of a people. He proposed a model for the study of music in culture involving three areas: sound, behaviour, and conceptualization (1964:29–34; Rice 1987:469–72). These three areas show the interdisciplinary nature of ethnomusicology with its feet in both the humanities and the social sciences. While his model is still hugely influential today and affects my own research, many ethnomusicologists have moved beyond his simple construct to consider broader themes such as symbolic systems of thought and action that are exemplified in music. Borrowing from Clifford Geertz, Timothy Rice proposes a different tripartite model. He suggests that, alongside Merriam's model, researchers ask the simple question, 'How do people historically construct, socially maintain, and individually create and experience music?' (1987:473–8) This model takes one beyond a dichotomy between anthropology and musicology and grounds ethnomusicology in several disciplines (1987:482–3).

While all ethnomusicologists should have some expertise in both the humanities and the social sciences, most would find it hard to master the many components of both disciplines. Thus, it is not possible for one particular researcher to use all aspects of both approaches in his or her study. In my case, while I have extensive musical instruction and performance experience, I have limited training in ethnomusicology and music theory. Since I have more background and experience in cultural studies and the social sciences, my interest and aim in this study is more ethnological than musicological.

Nevertheless, I am sensitive to Kidula's criticisms that outsiders tend to look at African music as exotic artefact (2006:99; Farhadian 2007:7). I look at music amongst

the Songhai not as a static, exotic oddity, but rather as a living, changing art form with cultural roots. My purpose is, first, to describe that art form in its richness so outsiders can better understand it and, second, to analyse it so insiders, particularly Christians, can put it into perspective and make their own contributions to the world of music.

3.1.3 Music

Embedded in the term ethnomusicology is the root 'music'. The question arises, What is music? Some say that 'music is the art of combining sounds in a way that is pleasing to the ear' (NG-A 2014; Muchimba 2008:29–30; Bebey 1975:3). The problem with definitions like this is that what is pleasing may differ from place to place and person to person. Furthermore, music in twenty-first century Europe and North America often includes many dissonant sounds which may not be 'pleasing'. These examples demonstrate how difficult it is to define the concept of 'music'. Instead of trying to define it, then, I will make some general comments and observations about it.

First, there are different taxonomies of music. The contemporary concept of art in North America and Europe is an Enlightenment idea. In this paradigm, art is separate from life and intended mostly for contemplation and aesthetic enjoyment (Wolterstorff 1980:23–33; Merriam 1964:30; Rice 2014:61–3). In addition, musical sound is divided into art, folk, and popular streams. Art music is associated with the social elites and people deemed 'cultured', while popular music is relegated to the inferior masses. Folk music is somewhere in between, a music for minorities and ethnic/national groups and is viewed more highly than popular music (Nettl 2005:304). This separation of music from life and the division of music into various streams is far from the thinking of many Africans, who traditionally categorize music more by the setting and the performer than by the audience to which it is directed.

This leads to a second observation: music does not have the same connotations around the world. It cannot be easily delimited. The forms, sources, concepts, and

functions of music vary from culture to culture. The artefacts, techniques, scales, and behaviours associated with music differ from place to place, and the music of one society is not necessarily understood or appreciated by the people of another (Baker 2012:210). In addition, the roles and status of musicians change as one crosses national, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries. Some languages do not have a word for 'music' (Stone 1998:7).

A third observation is that while music is a universal phenomenon, it is not a universal language (King 2004:296–7; Merriam 1964:223; Avery 1996:13). Up to World War II, many musicologists spoke of music in the singular as though there was only one kind of music and all others were 'primitive' forms of the one music standard. This implied that everyone everywhere held the same ideas and could readily appreciate the styles and genres of music from another place. This assumption has been proven false (Nettl 2005:36; Titon & Slobin 2001:3–4; King 2004:296–7). A hymn from the United States will not necessarily have the same force or meaning in a church in Africa even when translated into a local language. Similarly, the music of the *fooley* may sound like 'noise' to an American and, out of context, it loses its force and significance.

Fourth, music and language have much in common, but they are not the same. Both are universal (Gittins 1995:417; Blacking 1973:7; Nettl 2005:46–7), both are a means of communication, and both imply relationships between people. Nevertheless, music and language are different forms of communication. It is impossible to draw a sharp line between them, but neither can one equate them. Sometimes the same phenomena can be classified as both language and music (song, for example). Thus, formulating a definition of music often depends on where one draws the line between music and language (Nettl 2005:46–7; Chenoweth & Bee 1968:205; Jones 1975:39; Feld 1974).

John Blacking goes beyond a definition to describe music (1973:9–25; Nettl 1985:64–7). First, he says, it is an aural process. In many Western contexts, people think of music as something noted in a score or book, but music is nothing if not a type of sound. This is particularly true in the Songhai context where most people cannot read musical notation. Second, music is 'humanly organized sound' (Blacking 1973:3-31). In other words, it is both organized and the product of human behaviour. No other creatures can organize sound in such a detailed and intricate fashion. Third, music is built around communication and relationships. It has meaning, and that meaning depends not on the sound but on people and their relationships with each other. This means that music is related to other parts of culture, or, as Blacking puts it, it is 'soundly organized humanity' (1973:89–116).

Because of the issues I have mentioned, many ethnomusicologists have declined to formulate a definition of music because it is nearly impossible to find one that fits all cultures and eras (Merriam 1964:27; Mendez 2005:183; Nettl 2005:15–20). The complexity and diversity of musics around the world demonstrate how difficult the task is. Bruno Nettl says that 'To respect all cultures and to study them on their own terms is desirable, but to strive for an interculturally valid approach *equally* derived from all the world's societies may not be.' (original emphasis) (2005:25) Rather than defining music, then, my purpose will be to describe and analyse it in the Songhai society and church.

3.1.4 Singing

Every known culture has some kind of vocal music (Hood 1977:66; Best 2003:143; Saliers 2007:61). Singing is a unique human act combining speech with sounds from a particular scale of pitches in a regular pulse during specific performative contexts (Fitch 2006:178–9). What are the functions of singing? What happens when people sing? Alan Merriam lists ten interrelated functions of music in *The Anthropology of Music*

(1964:219–27; Muchimba 2008:80). Three in particular relate to song in this study. The first function is emotional expression. Songs often have a way of expressing the inexpressible, communicating ideas and emotions which cannot be expressed through ordinary speech (Corbitt 1998:118–19; Saliers 2007:7–8; Hatcher 2001:476). Emotion may come in the form of a religious exaltation, an expression of grief, an induced attitude, or a social protest. One research participant stated that he created songs as a social protest to motivate people to clean up his hometown (AB 2013, 1:23:26-1:23:55). The emotional impact of music on people can be extremely powerful. Both my primary and secondary sources have noted how the songs of the traditional *jesere* can induce such an extraordinary level of emotion in their patrons that they will begin to tremble and dispense large sums of money or goods to the praise-singer (Hale 1998:47–9, 115–23; Stoller 1989a:111; MN 2012, 43:22-44:37; AY 2014, 1:07:36-1:07:54; MB2 2012, 1:13:49-1:14:21).

The second function which applies to this study is the function of communication. Song is particularly suited to communicate direct information to those who understand the language. For example, the *jesere* tell the epic stories of the Songhai people and communicate important community values and practices. Music is also a potent mnemonic device. The human brain is wired in such a way that linking words to simple, singable tunes makes the words easier to remember and repeat than ordinary speech (Carson 2002a:167; Corbitt 1998:210). In addition, musical language is often more permissive than ordinary discourse, allowing one to say things that one might not normally say with simple words (Merriam 1964:46). The words of the Songhai tune *Yeeti Yeeta*, for example, communicate through song what one would never mention in normal conversation: that a woman is pregnant (OH 2016, #IV-A). Thus, music is a powerful tool for education and information.

A third function which relates to this research project is the validation of social institutions and religious rituals. The music of the *fooley* involves not only instruments, but praise-singing, and both are means of calling on the spirits and validating ancient rituals that the Songhai have practised for centuries. These religious rituals continue to meet the needs of individual Songhai for healing, protection, and power (Rouch 1996:235–61; Stoller 1989a:33–5, 131–9; DeValve 2014a, 8:04-8:35 p.m.).

3.1.5 Musical Instruments

In most of the world's musical cultures, instruments are secondary to song and are shaped by song (Best 2003:143). Indeed, musical instruments often copy speech patterns in Africa (Baker 2012:88; Ong 1977:413). Moreover, the variety and complexity of musical instruments in the world is astonishing. Until Europeans and North Americans began encountering the musics of other cultures, they commonly classed instruments in three categories: winds, strings, and percussion. This system of classification originated in Hellenistic times (Kartomi 1990:108–116, 136). The discovery of many new and 'exotic' instruments in the nineteenth century led to the development of new classification systems which were supposedly universal, including all known or possible instruments in the world. The most famous of these taxonomical systems, one that is still in use today, was created by Erich M von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs in 1914. It is a downward classification system that catalogues all musical instruments into four categories based on the nature of the sounding body: idiophones ('self-sounding' instruments), membranophones (instruments with a stretched skin or membrane that produces sound), chordophones (instruments with sounding strings), and aerophones (instruments which make sounds through a vibrating column of air) (Kartomi 1990:168–72; Wachsmann et al. 2004). In the 1960s, Mantle Hood added a fifth category to accommodate a new class of instruments which did not fit into the

other categories: electrophones (those which produce sounds through electronic means) (Wachsmann et al. 2004:239).

While classification systems like Hornbostel/Sachs help us grasp the variety and complexity of musical instruments, they are contested, and they do not speak for all peoples (Kartomi 1990:190–201; Wachsmann et al. 2004:239–40). I will have more to say about classification in Chapter Five, Section 5.1. Suffice it to say that different cultures view classification from different angles. In Africa, there may be a different starting point than the nature of the sounding body (Kartomi 1990:241–2).

3.2 Music and Culture

A major concern of ethnomusicology is the relationship between music and culture. It is impossible to isolate music and study it apart from culture (Gennep 1960:88; McGann 2002:21; Nketia 1962:4; Berger 2008:72). In this thesis, I do not want to give the impression that I am trying to analyse Songhai music outside of its context. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary to examine the parts of a whole in order to understand and explain the whole. It is in this sense that Merriam talks about 'music as culture' (1964:29–32; King 2004:296; Titon 2001:xiv). When one understands the music of a society, one understands better the people who make it. On the other hand, one can learn much about a culture through its music (Merriam 1964:261–2; Chenoweth & Bee 1968:208; Chernoff 1981:36).

Because music and culture are so intertwined, the music(s) of a culture reflect(s) the prevailing bias of that culture. Thus, Songhai traditional music reinforces the strong group/strong grid orientation in the culture, giving people a sense of identity and purpose. Not only does this music serve to delineate social boundaries and group cohesion, it also has strict rules and regulations regarding who performs it and when it is used (Chapter Two, Sections 3.2 & 4.3). I will deal more with the particulars of Songhai traditional music in Chapter Five.

One question that needs to be addressed here is, What is culture? In this study I do not wish to enter the debate about a definition of culture. A few comments are in order, however. First, when people talk about culture, they often mean cultures. Early in the development of anthropology, scholars talked about culture in the singular as though there were levels or stages of civilization. They constructed an evolutionary scheme whereby societies advanced from lower, simpler forms to higher, more complex forms of culture. As a consequence, they associated lower accomplishments with 'primitive' peoples and inferior levels of moral, religious, and intellectual development (Bediako 1992:230–31; Muchimba 2008:14–18). Today, most people recognize that there is no single world culture, and often there are many cultures in each nation-state (Crouch 2008:10; Farhadian 2007:231). Thus, the meaning of the word is often in the plural.

Second, culture is more than simply tangible phenomena like behaviours and artefacts. Rob Baker defines culture as 'the way we do things around here', placing the emphasis on the empirical aspects of culture such as dress, food, language, and art (2012:211). This superficial notion of culture ignores the underlying motivations, meanings, and reasons for the phenomena in question. Culture is more than visible or audible things. It also involves worldview, values, attitudes, beliefs, and roles (Hesselgrave 1991:99–104; Corbitt 1998:33–4; Moreau 1995:121). Stephen Feld says that culture is the inventory of what people know, not simply what they make or do (1974:211).

Third, culture involves acquired knowledge and habits used to interpret experience and generate behaviour (Barney 1981:173). Children learn their cultural milieu as they grow until the patterns and beliefs become ingrained. Bruno Nettl believes that the best formulation of a definition of culture is that of anthropologist E B Taylor from 1871: 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits *acquired by man as a member of*

society' (my emphasis) (Taylor 2016:1; Nettl 2005:132). While many anthropologists and ethnomusicologists believe this definition has reached the limit of its usefulness (Geertz 1973:4), it still wields considerable influence in the social sciences.

Fourth, culture involves relationships (Best 2003:173). It cannot happen in isolation. All the elements of culture combined do not make culture. It is in the interaction between people that culture develops. Thus, it is shared and public (Crouch 2008:13). People make culture, and people make music. Culture is more than simply behaviours and values combined (Rynkiewich 2008:36; Rice 2008:45; McGann 2002:27–8).

Fifth, the larger the culture, the more variety and diversity it exhibits within certain communicable and accepted norms (Best 2003:173). The Songhai culture, spread out over a wide geographical area with a large population, is a moderately-sized culture. It has a high level of homogeneity, but there is also diversity, as I will demonstrate when I describe its music in Chapter Five.

Sixth, culture is contested. People in different parts of the world choose to focus on different concepts and categories. What is and is not music will change from one culture to another. In many Arab countries, for instance, 'music' is usually limited to a despised, non-religious status performed by marginal people. By contrast, chanting the Qur'an, which might not be considered a type of music in many European countries, is a separate category of sound and highly esteemed (Nettl 1985:40, 156–8; Rouget 1985:256–7; Corbitt 1998:34).

Finally, culture is a construct. People change over time, and culture changes with them. Thus, culture has both continuity and discontinuity (Rynkiewich 2008:36).

My preferred definition of culture comes from Craig Storti: 'Culture is the [learned and] shared assumptions, values, [concepts, attitudes], and beliefs of a group of people which result in characteristic behaviors.' (my additions in brackets) (1999:5)

This definition takes into account both the visible and invisible elements of culture, the fact that culture is acquired, and the interpersonal nature of culture. It also shows the interaction between the intangible and tangible components of culture.

What are the implications of this for music and for this research? First, the study of music in culture must look beyond the immediate, tangible elements of sound and behaviour to the ideas and concepts that lie behind music. Second, the meaning of music lies in people, not just in sound (Corbitt 1998:33, 117; King 2008c:141; Geertz 1973:404). For this reason, it is important to study the people who make music – their relationships, habits, patterns, and beliefs (Nettl 2005:9). Jeff Todd Titon and Mark Slobin use the term 'music-culture' to describe 'a group's total involvement with music: ideas, actions, institutions, material objects' (2001:4). It is here where grid/group cultural theory is particularly helpful in examining the musical practices of the Songhai. Group cohesion and cosmology have a profound impact on identity and, by extension, on musical preferences. Music also reinforces group cohesion and regulations. Third, the study of any music-culture is a valid and worthy subject of inquiry. As Roberta King states, 'Music should not be judged or interpreted … based on the definitions of another culture. Thus, each type of music that is associated with human beings is open to ethnomusicological investigation.' (2004:297; Blacking 1973:33–4; Titon 2008:40) Fourth, music is not only shaped by culture, it also shapes culture. Finally, music is always in the process of change. This study will examine the main forces affecting change on Songhai music.

3.3 Worship

Another way ethnomusicology informs this research is in its examination of worship practices, posing questions like, What is the role of music in worship? and Why do people sing in worship rituals? Since music is associated with the supernatural in all cultures and worship is a way to relate to the supernatural, music is often a part of

worship (Merriam 1964:223–5; Nettl 2005:40). Few anthropologists have dealt seriously with a concept of worship. One exception is Victor Turner. In a series of articles in *Worship* magazine, Turner describes social life as a dialectical process between 'structure' and 'anti-structure' (1972a:390; 1969:81–83; Nichols 1985:402–3). Structured society, with all its hierarchy and status, is abstract, normative, and institutionalized. 'Anti-structure', appearing in the interstices of society, is more egalitarian, spontaneous, immediate, and concrete (Turner 1969:114–6; Bascom 2013:22). For Turner, worship is 'a series of intervals … between social experiences'. These liturgical intervals can often be described as 'anti-structural' because they reverse, expunge, reinterpret, replace, or suspend the normal structural values, relationships, and norms of society (1972a:390–91). They are threshold experiences, where the worshipper encounters the transcendent (Farhadian 2007:265–8; Tovey 2004:75–8) Rituals like worship commonly enter the 'anti-structural' mode in which people operating on the margins of society experience a sense of common humanity and togetherness, what Turner refers to as '*communitas*'. '*Communitas*', says Turner, 'is a fact of everyone's experience, yet it has almost never been regarded as a reputable or coherent subject of study by social scientists. It is, however, central to religion, literature, drama, and art.' (1972a:393)

Turner argues that *communitas* emerges out of liminality. Arnold Van Gennep first coined the term liminality to describe the second of three stages that people in 'pre-industrial' societies experience in rites of passage (1960:21). As I defined it in Chapter One, liminality is a state of in-betweenness, of marginality, of being neither here nor there. Turner argues that in 'industrial' societies, liminality is often expressed in religion. Many properties that characterize a state of liminality – for instance, humility, sacredness, social equality, and heteronomy – apply equally to Christian worshippers

(1969:92–3, 156; Nichols 1985:403).[3] Worship in this sense may be considered a spiritual 'rite of passage' (Corbitt 1998:79; Tigan 1998:335).

The experience of liminality and *communitas* often leads to the generation of myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art. In worship, symbols and rituals may hold such meaning and power that they may be said to embody the experience (Nichols 1985:404; Underhill 1937:13–17; Hatcher 2001:20–21). J Nathan Corbitt defines ritual as the sharing of meaning through the practice of collective symbols (1998:60, 64). Symbols condense the values of society and participate in the reality to which they point (Douglas 2003; Tovey 2004:10, 37). Chenoweth, citing the philosopher Cassirer, states that art is an intensification of reality through created symbols and that music imitates life (Chenoweth 1999:162; Cassirer 1944:141–3). Worship rituals include such symbols as icons, music, and archaic language, and each symbol has a particular meaning or meanings (Gelineau 1992:494; Nichols 1985:404; Turner 1972a:391). Clifford Geertz adds that meanings are stored in symbols, which are in turn dramatized in rituals or myths. The rituals and myths summarize what people know about the world and how one ought to behave in it. He concludes, 'Sacred symbols thus relate an ontology and a cosmology to an aesthetics and a morality.' (1973:127)

Grid/group cultural theory adds two insights here. First, since cultures express their group commitment and regulation through symbols (Douglas 2003:37), it follows that worship music often expresses the worshippers' experience of group (*communitas*) and their system of classification. Second, isolate and enclave cultures may be bastions of anti-structure (Bascom 2013:22). Individuals are so committed to a cause and to each other that they have a high degree of solidarity even though they have weak leadership

[3] Turner acknowledges that worship rituals can become structured or institutionalized. They then become hedged by rules and interdictions and are no longer a true expression of *communitas* (1972:402–3). Thus, not all worship is liminal or part of the 'anti-structure' of life.

and not much structure. It is in the enclave cultural bias that I would place the Songhai church.

The semiotic approach to the study of worship posits that symbols are a way of viewing the self and the world (Geertz 1973:44–6, 250), and music gives concrete and emotive expression to that belief in a particular moral and aesthetic style. In addition, religious systems with their symbols are both models of reality and models for reality. Not only do they orient people, but they also motivate them to live out the premises of the symbol system. Symbols also reflect anti-structure. Through an experience of lowliness, sacredness, and equality, people open up to symbolic instruction from the sacred concerning values, meaning, and relationships (Hatcher 2001:481). Thus, when worship is done well, it draws out the facets of people's lives that are inherently liminal and brings them together in *communitas*, uniting them in a common bond around commonly recognized symbols (Nichols 1985:408).

Mark Hatcher suggests that singing helps people transfer from structure to the anti-structural mode of *communitas* in four ways. First, he says, singing helps strip away the normal modes of interaction and opens people up to communication with the divine. Second, singing provides a symbol system for interacting with God. It expresses devotion, emotion, and intention better than spoken words because of its multi-dimensional character. Third, the mnemonic aspect of singing helps people remember the model for reality expressed in the song. Finally, he says, 'Poetry and song capture the forms with the illuminated meanings and become vehicles through which God impresses meaning on people's minds.' (2001:482–3)

3.4 Music and Identity

Music bears the mark of the society in which it was made. It is a vital part of a people's identity (Blacking 1973:108; Chenoweth 1973:206; Kidula 2008a:101–102). In the contemporary world, however, several change-agents have contributed to a modification

or transformation of people's identities, and this is perhaps most conspicuous in the arena of music. Three important change-agents are Westernization, globalization, and urbanization (Schrag 2010:56). These terms are tricky to define and mean different things to different people. There is also considerable overlap between them. Here I will deal with a definition of each and will treat them more in depth in Chapter Seven. I am borrowing from ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl for my definitions.

Westernization 'is the substitution of central features of Western music for their non-Western analogues, often with the sacrifice of essential facets of the tradition' (1985:20). By contrast, globalization, which Nettl calls 'modernization', is the incidental movement of a system or its components towards another tradition without the sacrifice of central and essential aspects of the local tradition. Urbanization involves the migration of people from small towns and villages to large, metropolitan areas where many cultures and languages mix. Closely related to urbanization is industrialization, which in this context concerns the principles of musical instrument construction and dissemination, the notation of music, and the electronic means of preserving and distributing music (1985:20–21). All these change-agents are important in the development of people's identities and have significant implications for Songhai traditional music and Protestant church music. As I will argue in Chapter Seven, they also place limitations on Douglas' model for grid/group cultural theory.

3.5 Missiology and Ethnomusicology

Missionaries and anthropologists have shared a close, but uneasy, relationship since 1900 (Hiebert 1996:65; Priest 2001; Whiteman 2008:3–5). They occupy overlapping, often competing, spheres of interest and scholarship (Salamone 1986:56–7). While many modern missionaries have displayed a suspicion for or a disinterest in anthropology, some missionaries have made significant contributions to the discipline (Whiteman 2004a:36–7, 40–41). On the other hand, many anthropologists have tended

to be atheistic or agnostic and have often been hostile to missionaries, viewing them as pernicious agents of cultural change (Stipe 1980:165; Priest 2001:34–6). So-called 'postmodern' anthropology looks with disdain on missionaries who apply anthropological principles, but at the same time values the disclosure of one's biases and presuppositions. This leaves the Christian scholar both more accountable to the academic community and more vulnerable to being labelled or discredited (Priest 2001:43).

In a similar fashion, there has been a great deal of suspicion between many ethnomusicologists and those who seek to apply the principles of ethnomusicology to Christian mission (Kisliuk 2008:190). Ethnomusicologists fear that missionaries come with an ethically-flawed, dishonest agenda and use the discipline to impose their views on others. John Vallier, for instance, claims that 'ethnomusical missionaries' are deceitful about their true motives and insensitive to culture (2003:92–5; Schrag & Coulter 2003). It is true that missionary motives and practices have often been flawed, biased, and ethnocentric, but they are not the only ones who could sustain such charges (Hiebert 1978:167–8; Priest 2001; Stipe 1980:165–74). While missionaries are agents of change, there are many other factors, both synchronic and diachronic, that affect cultural change. Furthermore, since change is a constant, who decides which changes are 'good' and which ones are 'bad'? If cultures do not change and adapt, they stagnate and die. Furthermore, cultures are often invigorated by change. Anthony Gittins claims that the greatest innovations of Western culture have often come through a stranger (St. Patrick, for example) (1995:416–7, 422). Kofi Agawu adds that one should resist the efforts of ethnomusicologists who try to 'protect' Africans from outside domination because the outcome will be intellectual isolation and impoverishment (2003:189). While not perfect, missionaries often spend many years of their lives in one place and come to know another language and culture well. Some may occupy a liminal space

somewhere between two cultures. Many of them have earned enough respect from their host culture to be considered culture mediators, able to speak with authority on behalf of another culture (King 2008d:68).

Roberta King highlights four spheres in which ethnomusicology as practised by Christians may be distinguished from the general practice of ethnomusicology (2004:296–301).[4] First is the cultural context. King states that the study of a music-culture of a people contributes to 'exegeting the mission context'. In Chapter Five I will deal with the music-culture of the Songhai. Second is the biblical text. There should be a theology of music-in-context as well as intentional theologizing when composing songs. The next section of this chapter will deal primarily with the biblical text in relation to worship and music. Third, one needs to know the personal pilgrimage of those implicated in the discussion: the strangers – including their attitudes toward and knowledge of local music – and local people. This sphere is dealt with throughout the thesis and comes from observations, interviews, and personal experience. The final sphere is the faith community and its history. I will deal with this sphere in Chapter Six.

4. Liturgical Study

4.1 Worship, Theology, and Music

4.1.1 Definition of Worship

A working definition of the word 'worship', which takes into account both the biblical meaning and contemporary Christian usage, will be useful for my purposes. Constructing a definition of worship, however, like defining culture or music, is a difficult task for several reasons. First, the use of the English word 'worship' has changed over the centuries. It once had to do with the worthiness of the person or thing reverenced and in some cases God was not even the object (for example, the traditional

[4] Compare this with Timothy Keller's three sources for worship music: the Bible, the cultural context, and the historic tradition of the community (2002:197). Keller does not talk about the personal pilgrimage of those involved in music. See also Basden (2004a:256).

marriage vows say, ‘With my body I thee worship’) (White 2001:27). Second, the semantic range of the word used in contemporary Christian circles does not correspond exactly to any word or word group in the Greek or Hebrew texts of the Bible. In fact, several words in the original may be rendered ‘worship’ in the English Bible (Carson 2002a:13–14, 18–19; Corbitt 1998:53). The meaning of the word becomes even more complicated when comparing French and English versions. The same words or word groups often rendered as ‘worship’ in English are translated using at least nine different words in the French *Louis Segond* Version of the Bible (DeValve 2012). Third, worship is an experience. It does not fit neatly into formulas or creeds. Describing worship cannot substitute for the experience of worship. While theology helps Christians articulate what worship is and does, it is sometimes a feeble attempt to describe the experience of God’s grace and the response of his people (Segler 2006:6). A final reason a definition of worship is difficult to compose is that there is much disagreement in the Christian church about what worship is. People place different emphases and elements in their definition based on their theology or practice. Paul Basden says that ‘There is no ideal definition of worship. No one has defined worship so completely as to plumb the depths of this divine-human encounter.’ (2004c:13)

There are three important considerations in a definition of worship. The first is an understanding of the main Greek and Hebrew words often translated as ‘worship’ in English Bibles. The most important word group in the Old Testament comes from the root שׁחה, ‘to bow down, prostrate oneself’. The word, in its Hithpael pattern, is translated as ‘worship’ seventy-five times in the NIV (Brown 1999:1005; Carson 1993a:23, 52–3; Pankratz 2005:43–44). The LXX translates this word with προσκυνέω, whose root meaning was ‘to kiss’, but which also meant ‘to do reverence or homage to’ (Wigram 1983:350–51). This Greek verb and its associated noun is used sixty-one times

in the New Testament, where it denotes exclusively worship addressed to God or Jesus Christ (Young n.d.:1075; Schönweiss & Brown 1978:875–9; Pankratz 2005:48–9).

A second Hebrew word is עבד, which, in its nominative form, often carries the meaning of 'servant' or 'slave'. The verb form is sometimes rendered as 'worship' when used in relation to God. The LXX usually translates this word by δουλεύω when it refers to service as a slave and by λατρεύω when it has a religious significance. The λατρεύω word group is used twenty-six times in the New Testament, all in a religious sense of 'worship' or 'service' to God. Another related Greek word, λειτουργέω, 'to perform sanctioned religious service' is used fifteen times in the New Testament to denote special service to God, often in relation to the Old Testament cultus (Hess 1978:549–53; Pankratz 2005:49–51; Wiersbe 2000:20).

One final important Old Testament word which expresses the idea of worship is the Hebrew root ירא, 'to fear'. When used of God as object, it is often translated as 'worship' in the sense of paying due reverence or honour. While the corresponding Greek terms σέβομαι and φοβέω are not often translated as 'worship' in the New Testament, they do sometimes connote the idea of a healthy reverence or awe for someone (Pankratz 2005:51–5).

A second consideration in a definition of worship is the different formulations of what worship is. While there is insufficient room in this thesis to consider a large number of them, here are a few:

Harold Best: 'Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become in light of a chosen or choosing God.' (2003:17)

D A Carson: 'Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so.' (2002b:25)

Evelyn Underhill: Worship is ‘the total adoring response of man to the one Eternal God self-revealed in time’ (1937:61).

William Temple: ‘To worship is to quicken the mind by the holiness of God; to feed the mind with the truth of God; to purge the imagination by the beauty of God; to open the heart to the love of God; and to devote the will to the purpose of God.’ (1942:30; Segler 2006:3)

Wayne Grudem: ‘Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.’ (1994:1003)

Pope Pius X: Worship is ‘the glorification of God and the sanctification of humanity’ (1966:4; White 2001:23).

J Nathan Corbitt: Worship is ‘living in constant communion with God and becoming like God in the humility of service and prayer’ (1998:54).

Common to most definitions of worship are a God who speaks and acts and a people who respond in loving adoration and service. Worship, then, is both God’s work and ours (Dyrness 2009:3–4). It is not a passive activity. In almost every instance in the Bible, the verbs used for worship are active. The worshipper acts on or performs an action for the one worshiped (Pankratz 2005:56–9). God (or a god) acts to save and transform the worshipper. Worship, then, is a form of human activity with God or a god as both object and subject (Wilt 2006; Dawn 1999:8).

Perhaps one of the best definitions of worship, suggested by Miroslav Volf (1993:207), comes from the Bible itself:

> Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of the lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Heb. 13:15-16)

The two sacrifices mentioned in these verses summarize the worship of the Christian: adoration and action (Volf 1993:207–211). This resembles the reply Jesus gave Satan

during his temptation, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’ (Matt 4:10b) Volf adds,

> Turning to God in adoration does not entail turning away from the world; it entails perceiving God in relation to the world and the world in relation to God….Adoration of God leads to action in the world and action in the world leads to adoration of God. (1993:209)

Thus, worship is both obedient service to God and joyful praise offered to him.

A third consideration relating to a definition of worship deals with the practice of worship. When Christians come together for worship, there is often a putting aside of the conventions and structures of society and an intentional laying hold of the mysterious and the supernatural. Together, believers experience their ‘in-betweenness’, the both/and threshold existence which characterizes their lives. They are in a liminal position inside and outside of time and beyond the bounds of the familiar and ordinary. In this place they may discover a heightened sense of togetherness or *communitas*, a place where distinctions between them cease to exist (Turner 1972a:399–402). Any definition of worship must take into account this mystical, symbolic, and communal aspect of the word. Sacrifices of praise and service are not offered in isolation.

4.1.2 Toward a Theology of Worship

If constructing a definition of worship is difficult, the formulation of a Christian theology of worship is even harder. There is disagreement amongst scholars and theologians over how to interpret the Bible’s teaching on worship. During the Reformation, two opposing worship principles developed in the Protestant church. The first, the adiaphoric principle, states that whatever is not forbidden in the Bible is permissible in worship. It is strongly associated with the Anglican confession and some Lutheran churches. Its counterpart, the regulative principle, states that worship should include only what is clearly prescribed or described in Scripture. Presbyterians, Puritans, and those in the Anabaptist tradition often operate on this principle (Corbitt 1998:258; White 2001:125; Segler 2006:42–5). Between these two polarities lie a range

of beliefs and practices about worship. For example, Michael Farley (2008:592–602) points out distinctions of praxis and theology amongst those who hold to the regulative principle. Some, like John Piper and Timothy Keller, hold to a strict regulative principle which disallows anything not explicitly found in the New Testament. Others, like Robert Webber and Alan Ross, take a broader view, seeing theological principles stated or practised in the entire Bible as forming the locus of liturgical norms. It is important to note here that neither the adiaphoric nor the regulative principle exerts much weight in the Songhai church.

Another reason a theology of worship is hard to formulate is that contemporary usage of the word 'worship' includes several reductionist views of the word's meaning (Carson 2002b:14–16; Best 2003:9, 61). The first is that worship refers to a cultic practice – what many Protestants call the 'service' – separate from the rest of life. This creates a false dichotomy between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' in the life of the Christian as though worship and the spiritual were divorced from life (Hirsch 2006:90–91; Best 2003:119; Volf 1993:203). A survey I took in an American church asked the question, 'What is worship?' Some respondents answered that worship 'usher[s] us into God's presence', which implied that the worshipper was not in God's presence before coming to church (DeValve 2011; Best 2003:119; Volf 1993:203). This attitude also leads to the idea that music is either 'sacred' or 'secular' even though the boundary between the two categories is indistinct and changes with time (Saliers 2007:55–8).

The opposite of this attitude is that the church assembles not for worship, but for edification. Worship is mainly a private affair. If worship includes all of life, however, one could hardly exclude the congregational setting from the category of worship, even if the primary aim for assembling together were edification.

A third reductionist view equates liturgy or a part of the liturgy with worship. This is especially common in churches where worship is equated with music. Biblical

worship is more than just music and includes the entire liturgy (Peterson 1993:83; JM & MA 2012, 2:54-6:50; HK 2013, 45:04-46:46; Best 2003:9). A variation of this view is that music is simply a preparation for the message to follow (Jones 2010:27–8; DD 2016, 6:18-8:42; HM1 & AI1 2015, 50:10-50:54).

A final reason for the disagreement about a theology of worship is the different theological approaches to the Bible. I will mention three. A systematic approach, which tends to look at the Bible as a whole, tries to synthesize and construct theology along topical and synchronic lines. What D A Carson calls 'biblical theology', on the other hand, tends to look at the Bible in fragments or books and takes a more detailed, diachronic approach (2002b:14–17). Both are legitimate ways to interpret the Bible, but they result in different approaches to the subject of worship. A third approach, narrative theology, looks at the Bible's story line and 'meaning' but may ignore or distort propositional sections.

While there is not space here for a full discussion of the issue, a theology of worship must take into account several factors. First, it must be grounded in both Old and New Testaments (Farley 2008:591). This is not to say that one should favour 'biblical' theology over 'systematic' or 'narrative' theology. Rather, it should be inclusive, bringing together the best scholarship from various theologies with their inherent contradictions.

Second, it must recognize that biblical worship is both human and divine. It is divine in its origin, focus, and goal, but human in its response. By definition, both human and divine activity are necessary for worship to happen (Webber 2004:184–5; Best 2003:21; Carson 2002a:32). One of my field notes has this to say about the divine and human elements of worship:

> While we may say that Christian worship begins and ends with God, without a human component, there can be no worship. Worship is a response to God – who he is and what he has done – ascribing to him all honour and worth because he is worthy. (DeValve 2014b)

Mary McGann further says that:

> Christian worship is not only about God; more importantly, it is of God, and therefore a profoundly theological act. It is a living encounter, a fresh experience of God's self-disclosure and self-communication, an emergent experience of God's action within the community. (2002:67)

Third, a biblical theology of worship must take into account all of life, not just the assembling of a community. For the Christian, there really are no sacred places or times. All of life is sacred, and all of life is an act of worship (Best 2003:9; McGann 2002:65). Andrew Walls says that, 'Christian faith is embodied faith, embodied in thought as well as in living. It cannot be carried without a lifestyle that forms a casing for it.' (2007a:32) Many Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America do not make a false dichotomy between 'sacred' and 'secular', and I believe the Bible supports this perspective on life (Musk 1992:163–4; Kidula 2008b:46–7). This does not reduce the sacredness or importance of corporate worship. Rather, as one theologian puts it, 'While all of life is worship, gathered worship with the body of Christ is at the heart of a life of worship. Corporate worship is intended by God to inform and elevate a life of worship.' (Hughes 2002:142)

Fourth, worship is structured with embodied rituals. These rituals are formal and organized and have various purposes. Even though one purpose of worship is edification, there are other purposes such as praise, proclamation, and exhortation. These purposes are not mutually exclusive but overlap and interact with each other (see Ac. 2:42-47) (Best 2003:77–87; Peterson 1993:76–7; Corbitt 1998:43–4). In twelve of my forty interviews with Songhai Christians, for instance, people expressed the idea that proclamation is one of the primary functions of worship music (Choir 2012, #IV; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 26:38-26:55; GS 2012, 51:15-51:53).

Fifth, worship must involve the whole person. It should balance intellect and emotion, head and heart (Bailey 1983:34). It needs to engage both thought and feelings and appeal to all the senses. John Piper says that intellectual worship based mainly on

doctrine and theology produces dead orthodoxy and a church full of artificial admirers. Worship based almost entirely on emotion, however, produces frenzy and cultivates shallow thinking within the church. He concludes, 'True worship comes from people who are deeply emotional and who love deep and sound doctrine.' (1986:81–2; Wiersbe 2000:23; Underhill 1937:23–5)

Finally, worship involves sacrifice. This is evident in the Old Testament, with its daily animal sacrifices, but it has echoes in the New Testament in passages like Ro. 12:1, where believers are admonished to offer their bodies as 'living sacrifices' as an act of worship (Wiersbe 2000:98–104; Horness 2004:114–15).

4.1.3 Worship and Music

Perhaps no other aspect of Christian worship has been the source of as much controversy as music and musical styles (Jones 2010:5–6). One aspect of this controversy involves musical instruments. In the early centuries of Christianity, there was much opposition to the use of musical instruments in worship because of their association with pagan rites and games. Musical instruments were excluded from the church until the eighth century. Later, the Calvinists and Puritans rejected the pipe organ as being too worldly (Faulkner 1994:397, 402; Kidula 2008b:21; Corbitt 1998:291–2). The twentieth century has seen heated controversy over the use of rock n roll styles of music with electric guitars, keyboards, and drums. Another aspect of the controversy has to do with musical styles. Are hymns with much theological content more appropriate for worship than repetitive choruses which treat only one theological theme? Are 'contemporary' styles simply an imitation of culture and a rejection of 'traditional' church music? Is the main purpose of worship music to draw unbelievers to the church? (Dawn 1999:120–34) Many detractors claim that 'contemporary' styles copy the decadent music of modern society and are shallow, repetitive, subjective,

consumer-oriented, and entertainment-focused (Frame 1997:43–54; Dawn 1999:224–39).

While some criticism is certainly well-founded, critics often ignore the controversies surrounding 'new' musics of the past and the expanding use of world musics today. They can also minimise the principle of intelligibility that the Protestant reformers themselves desired to apply (Frame 1997:17–20). This is what Andrew Walls calls the 'indigenizing principle', the ability to make the church a place where people feel 'at home' (2007b:7–15; Keller 2002:193–6; Bediako 1992:8; Carson 2002b:56). It tends to localize the vision of the church (Walls 2007b:53–4).

> An opposing tendency in church history is what Walls calls the 'pilgrim principle'
>
> > which whispers to [the Christian] that he has no abiding city and warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society; for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which could absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system. (2007b:8)

Briefly stated, this principle means that the local church cannot remain as it is. It must conform to a standard outside itself and point that church to a universal vision. While worship music, to be effective, must reflect culture in significant ways, it should move people beyond their cultural and theological blinkers and link Christians to the traditions of the past (Frame 1997:32–6, 98–106; Walls 2007b:8–12). The Nairobi Statement on worship and culture calls this the 'countercultural' principle. It challenges what is contrary to the gospel in a given culture (Wilkey 2015:138; Tovey 2004:134). Furthermore, while music does reflect the theology and worldview of a community, the style of music in itself has no real theological significance (Corbitt 1998:189–91; Ashton & Davis 2002:91). Instead, as Harold Best emphasizes, the arts should be a

servant of the liturgy (2003:72). Worship is an end in itself, and music is a tool for worship, not the worship itself (Wiersbe 2000:109; Segler 2006:99; Piper 1986:88–90).[5]

The Bible itself has more to say about singing in worship than instrumental accompaniment (Corbitt 1998:298).[6] Indeed, it was only in the twentieth century that musical instruments came to be accepted by the majority of Christian traditions as normative in worship (Stapert 1994:387–8). The New Testament, unlike the Old Testament, however, has little to say about worship practices. What is clear is that, in both Testaments, worship is a priestly matter (Basden 2004b:14; Hughes 2002:167–8). Following the principle of the priesthood of believers, all Christians have a responsibility in worship, especially to offer their 'sacrifice of praise' and 'sacrifice of service' (Schalk 1988:42–4, 54).

Three questions might be asked at this point. First, why do Christians come together for worship? One reason is undoubtedly that worship is a social activity with communal benefit. There is unity and power in the gathered community of the faithful, the *communitas* of which Turner spoke (1969:125–7; White 2001:18). In worship distinctions tend to be relativized and believers learn the discipline of hospitality (Farhadian 2007:20–21). Another reason, already mentioned, is for exhortation and encouragement. A Christian alone often has little support or inspiration and finds it difficult to live up to the principles of the Bible. One research participant likened worship to the traditional way of cooking over three stones with three pieces of wood. Removing any of the wood, he said, would diminish the heat and make for uneven cooking. One person alone cannot sustain the fire (MS4 2015, 54:58-56:53). A third major reason is to sing and dance. Most Africans love to sing, often at full volume. The

[5] J Nathan Corbitt applies the ideas of the indigenizing and pilgrim principles to music in his book, *The Sound of the Harvest*. He says that music is an expression of culture but also of 'kingdom', which is his way of saying the music of religious institutions (1998:25–45, 253–4)

[6] But see Ps. 150, which enjoins the use of various musical instruments.

Songhai/Zarma, in their restrained way, are no exception. Fourth, God created humans as worshipping beings, people who are 'continuously outpouring'. God did not create us because he needed our worship. Rather, he created us like him, the 'Continuous Outpourer' of grace and love (Best 2003:23). A final reason for corporate worship is to meet basic human needs for healing, meaning, knowledge, and forgiveness (Segler 2006:83–6).

Second, why do Christians sing in worship? The answers to this question are many. I will deal with four here. One is that song has a divine origin (Kleinig 1993:32–3, 37), and worship is a biblical mandate (Ps. 96:1). Four groups of people in this research responded to the question, 'Why do Christians sing?' by saying, 'God commanded it!' or 'God created us to worship.' (Women 2013, #V-C; Women 2015, 18:47-19:00) Another reason Christians sing is that, as a special form of speech, song has a way of conveying ideas that ordinary speech alone cannot. It softens the message and can express difficult concepts in a more pleasing form (Best 2003:144; Mendez 2005:183–91; White 2001:112). Don Saliers says that, 'Music offers the possibility of a way of understanding something that language may express but not fully contain.' (2007:75) In eight interviews research participants mentioned that song is at least equal to the sermon in communicating a message (Elders 2015, 1:11:02-1:12:34; MB2 2012, 1:08:57-1:10:03). Furthermore, song is an effective tool for teaching and exhortation. Words set to a well-crafted melody are generally more easily remembered than plain speech from a message (Best 2003:146; Hughes 2002:167; Balisky 1993:447; Men 2012, #III). Finally, song has a way of intensifying emotion and rendering the worship service more vibrant and inspirational (Segler 2006:98; Hatcher 2001:482–3). Each voice contributes a part to the vocal interplay and adds to the affective impact on the worshipper.

Third, what does worship music do? What happens when people worship in song? To answer this question, it will be helpful to look at some functions of music in worship. J Nathan Corbitt cites six functions in his book, four of which are important in this context (1998:17). First, there is the priestly function, where the worshipper expresses praise to God and is in communion with him. There is, secondly, the proclamation function, in which the worshipper narrates and remembers divine history. Another function is that of teaching and inspiration, the imparting of knowledge about God and the exhortation to serve and honour him. A fourth function is healing, in which the music exercises a therapeutic role in restoring relationships, provides a vision of hope, and instils courage.

Corbitt does not mention two other functions others have noted. One might be called the fellowship function. Music brings people together and strengthens the bonds between them, blurring distinctions (Gelineau 1992:495). The second might be called the 'ecstatic function'. There is no doubt that music holds power over people. While singing, Christians often have a special sense of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (Youth 2015, 18:24-19:14). AY stated that the times when the worship service was particularly good or spiritual gifts were powerfully manifested were the times when the praise (*louange*) music was really intense (2014, 1:14:19-1:15:00). In this respect, church leaders need to be aware that music can be exploited to influence or manipulate the worshippers. The key here is to harness and enhance the power through faith-driven worship and not use it as a technique to control or influence others (Best 2003:119–22; Corbitt 1998:118–19; Saliers 2007:vii).

4.2 Gospel, Music, and Culture

Of all the blunders of Western missions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one of the most egregious was the failure to appreciate and make use of local musics (AY 2014, 1:25:01-1:26:22). For many years, it was assumed by most Euro-Americans that

music was a universal language and that 'Western' culture was the pinnacle of civilization, to be passed on with gospel truths (Hiebert 1978:170; King 2004:296–7; Whelan 1983:173; TB-B 2013, 49:01-53:45). In addition, many missionaries believed that non-Western cultures were 'evil'. The attitude that 'Western music', especially religious art music, is far superior to other forms of music, still prevails in some quarters (Zahl 2004:42–53; Schmidt 2004:336–42; Baker 2012:37–8). Thomas Whelan writes that 'western hymns are often taken to be the musical models on which African liturgical music should be built' (1983:179).

Most missionaries and theologians now recognize that '[every] culture's creative signature is unique and inherently dignified' (Best 2003:178; DH & MH1 2014, 59:22-59:37). If the gospel is to be integrated into culture, it cannot ignore artistic forms. Thus, music, as an integral part of culture, must be expressed in worship in terms people can comprehend. Not all musical forms may be equally suitable for worship, however. For the Christian, it is not artefacts or artistic forms of a culture that are inherently 'evil' or 'good'. It is the value or power assigned to them by people that is the crux of the problem (Best 2003:174–7; Whelan 1983:180; Muchimba 2008:65).

So, what does the interaction between gospel and culture have to say about worship music? To answer this question, one must recognize that the church maintains three relationships to culture. First, it is part of culture. The church exists in the world and one cannot extract it from the world's cultural systems. Christians draw from a well of local beliefs, worldview, customs, and practices (Niebuhr 1956:1–43, 83–114; Carson 2008:64). Second, the church is counter-cultural. It stands apart from the world's systems. While Christians should not despise culture, they oppose many of the biases, assumptions, and practices of culture. These two relationships echo Andrew Walls' indigenizing and pilgrim principles. The third relationship is one of transformation. The church is called to transform culture, or, as Andy Crouch puts it, to

be ‘culture makers’. While big cultural changes are unlikely, small acts of creation and cultivation can have a powerful impact (2008:23, 66–76).[7] Like salt, which both preserves and flavours food – and which is invisible in food – and light, which provides a beacon of hope and direction and is highly visible, Christians provide a different savour and significance to culture (Mt. 5:13-16). The three relationships are in tension, and there is a real sense of paradox for Christians as they apply these relationships to their lives (Webber, response to Morgenthaler 2004:248; Niebuhr 1956; Carson 2008). Music in the church will reflect these tensions because it is both part of the church and part of culture.

Another way to answer the question is to tell a story. In 1913 William Wadé Harris, a Liberian evangelist, went to Côte d’Ivoire to proclaim the gospel. He met with remarkable success, and in just eighteen months, thousands of people responded to the message. The new believers asked Harris to teach them the songs of heaven so they could truly glorify God. He responded with these words,

> I have never been to heaven, so I cannot tell you what kind of music is sung in God’s royal village. But know this, that God has no personal favorite songs. He hears all that we say in whatever language. It is sufficient for us to compose hymns of praise to him with our own music and in our own language for him to understand. (Quoted in Krabill 2006:53)

Today the Harrist churches of Côte d’Ivoire are known for the hundreds of indigenous hymns they have composed. They use very little foreign music in worship. One lesson from this example is that worship music can be expressed through any language or culture (Krabill 2006:56). Another is that Christianity does not need to be firmly

[7] Crouch believes that ‘*we make sense* of the world by *making something* of the world’ (original emphasis) (2008:24). He criticizes Niebuhr for his implied assumption that the proper relationship of the Christian to culture is one of transformation. His critique includes contemporary Christians, who often believe they can transform culture through the study of worldview, effecting change by bringing others to understand their viewpoint. He states that most cultural transformations occur in smaller groups and most have unintended consequences (2008:180–201). I agree with his analysis that transformation of entire cultures is nearly impossible, but I also know of Christians who are working to effect small changes that have big consequences in the lives of ordinary people.

established amongst a people before they can begin creating their own worship music (Olson 1973:140–46).

4.3 Indigenous/Traditional Music in Church

4.3.1 Questions

At this point, one might be asking, 'What is appropriate worship music for church?' Some Christians have argued that only indigenous or 'heart' music should be used in worship (Chenoweth & Bee 1968:210–11; Jones 1975:39–40; Baker 2012:23–4). 'Heart music' is defined as 'the music a person grows up with, which speaks most profoundly to his/her emotions' (Avery 1996:13–14; Muchimba 2008:2; Collinge 2010:8). There are valid reasons for encouraging indigenous music. First, evidence shows that people may reject Christianity as foreign because of the use of outside music (Morse 1975:32; DA 2014, #II-A). Second, it enables clear communication and helps prevent a false understanding of the music (Baker 2012:14, 23–4). Third, it is meaningful and acceptable to the average person in a culture (King 2000:328; HA2 2016, 53:25-53:55). Fourth, indigenous music inspires and challenges (Krabill 2008:74).

Having said this, I believe there are two prior questions that must be asked. The first is, 'What constitutes indigenous music'? It may be easier to define indigenous or 'heart' music than to determine what it is in practice for an individual or church. Christians growing up in cities use multiple languages and confront multiple cultures. In today's interconnected, urbanized world, many of these Christians are multi-cultural and multi-musical. They may have several 'heart musics' (Kidula 2008a:105–106; King 2008b:131; CB 2012, 6:39-8:01). Muchimba questions whether 'there is any longer such a thing as a purely indigenous music style' (2008:57).

A second prior question is, 'Who decides what constitutes appropriate worship music?' In the past, missionaries have had much say in this matter, and their views often prevailed (Rynkiewich in Stipe 1980:174). While people may use theological or

pseudo-theological criteria for choosing music, Muchimba says that local churches should be able to determine their identity and practice within a Christian framework (2008:88; Friesen 1982:94; Hatcher 2001:484). This does not mean that an outsider has no say in what a local church sings. Sometimes sensitive outsiders can spot the tacit elements in another's cultural forms, and they can often help connect the church to its transcultural identity (Wilkey 2015:138–9; Hunt 1987:116–19; Farhadian 2007:245–6). The outsider's voice, however, should not be a deciding or dominating factor (Muchimba 2008:88; Corbitt 1998:26; Krabill 2008:74–5). I believe a balanced approach to the question of appropriate worship music in church is to study the Bible, culture, music, and the history of the local church together with local people and let them decide what to sing in the musical idioms that are most meaningful to them (King 2004:296–301). As Catherine Hodges says,

> 'Out with the Western, in with the indigenous' is as paternalistic a rallying cry (especially when coming from Westerners) as insisting that only Western music can be used in Christian worship. It may sound politically and culturally correct, but it is not. It is an oversimplification and simply wrong-headed. (2006a:168; Farhadian 2007:xviii)

4.3.2 Identities

When missionaries brought Christianity to Africa, they created a major crisis of identity for Africans by introducing 'Western' forms and rituals into the religious sphere and excluding 'pagan' ones (Bediako 1992:225–6; Muchimba 2008:13–14; Nettl 1985:7–10, 97; Kidula 2013:47). African music was one of many rejected cultural forms. This posed a dilemma for many people. How could one be a Christian and yet remain African? How does one's cultural identity expressed through music interact with one's Christian identity? The impact of this identity crisis lingers today.

Over time, of course, Africans did adapt to the new reality by fusing their styles of music with imported ones from Europe and North America, creating new genres like highlife and juju (Agawu 2003:13–16; Nettl 1985:10). Many also grew to like the

imported hymns, and some even created hybrid music for church, as Bruno Nettl explains:

> In Africa, church musicians were able to legitimize their newly indigenized music and at the same time keep it distinct from traditional music and that of the independent sects by modeling certain aspects of its presentation on Western art music. (1985:98)

Because of the high degree of compatibility between African and 'Western' musics, this was relatively easy; however, it tended to blur or efface traditional styles (Nettl 1985:45, 99; Muchimba 2008:2). The point here is that many Africans currently claim multiple identities and their musics are often tied to those identities (CB 2012, 7:19-8:23). These disparate identities affect the application of Douglas' cultural theory to the Songhai people, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Seven.

5. Music in Songhai Worship

5.1 Singing in Worship

5.1.1 Importance of Song in Worship

Song is one element of modern Christian worship with strong apostolic roots (Mendez 2005:180–81, 207; Hustad 1994:192; Wilken 2012:146). While the New Testament reveals little about what singing looked like in the early church, it is clear that it was important (1Co. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:16). Throughout the history of the church and across diverse cultures, song has played a central role in worship. While it has taken on different forms and served various purposes, it has rarely been absent.

Some communities eschew music as decadent or inappropriate for worship. In others a separate class of musicians has had a monopoly on many musical genres, and the majority of people have not learned to sing or play traditional instruments. For these reasons, some scholars have proposed that Christians in these places substitute culturally-appropriate forms of poetry or chanting for singing. Some even suggest the elimination of all music in liturgical settings in these contexts (Hall & Shawyer 2013:209–210; Travis 2005:378; CB 2012, 10:26-11:07).

I do not believe that this approach is practical amongst the Songhai. For one thing, every Christian participant in this research affirmed the importance of song and/or music in worship (see Chapter Six, Section 3.3). Second, there is already a precedent for music in the Protestant church of Niger. Whatever the origin of the music, people are already singing, and to try to substitute something more 'appropriate' would be nearly impossible. Third, the Songhai people live in Africa south of the Sahara, where participatory music is a common characteristic of culture. The Christian church has its own community events which include group singing and dance. These cannot easily be set aside. A fourth point is that people in West Africa, though strongly influenced by Islam, are also shaped by their traditional cultures, which include various forms of music. Many West African Muslims were shocked when Islamists suppressed all forms of music during their occupation of northern Mali in 2012 (Raghavan 2012; Davis 2013; Sissako 2015). Shortly afterwards, I attended a concert where a musician expressed his thanks to the French for liberating Mali and helping to protect its art (Mamar Kassey 2013). Finally, even if one wanted to introduce a non-musical worship style, the Songhai churches would be influenced by the strong and dynamic churches of West Africa's coastal regions. These churches have developed a large body of Christian hymnody, often borrowing from Euro-American Pentecostal worship styles, and they have a wide impact across the sub-region.

5.1.2 Worship Songs in Niger

When I first set foot in a Nigerien church in 1984, I expected the worship service to be lively and upbeat, with much singing, clapping, and dancing. To my surprise, we started off with a local rendition of the great hymn 'Holy, Holy, Holy', sung in the local language at about half-tempo with no musical accompaniment. The song seemed interminable, and though the congregants sang loudly, people seemed lifeless and detached from the music. There was a lack of expression and participation by the church

members.[8] To be fair, the youth and ladies' choirs both used locally-made rhythm instruments and moved to the beat of their songs, but the congregational singing seemed dull and monotonous, using tunes borrowed from the US or Europe.

During my years in Niger, I have seen this pattern repeated in many churches. The congregational songs are often borrowed from Western sources or Pentecostal churches to the south. They may occasionally be composed or arranged by a member of the community, but often they have a Western tune set to an 'African' rhythm, with instruments like the *jembe* and an electronic keyboard.

5.1.3 Importance of the Setting

In North America or Europe, music is often framed, isolated, and set off in a concert hall or on an electronic device. There is a stark contrast between musicians and audience (Nettl 1985:79; Muchimba 2008:54–6; Wolterstorff 1980:25–7). In many African societies, however, music is more participatory and intimately connected to daily life events. There is often a close correspondence between music and setting (Corbitt 1998:14–16). Thus, instruments or song styles are usually linked to specific occasions or events. In Africa 'a song is composed for a particular purpose and has no meaning apart from it' (Whelan 1983:178). Or, as Garba puts it, music has a functional character. One does not just play music. It generally has a social, ceremonial, ritual, or entertainment role (1992:102).

Christian worship music, introduced to West Africa by missionaries, was radically different from the traditional liturgical music used in spirit and ancestor worship (BK2 2013, 37:36-38:47). It was also strange to most Muslims, who tend to reject song and

[8] Felix Muchimba comments about why Western hymns translated into African languages often become slow and heavy. He quotes A M Jones, who states that it is a matter of rhythm and melody. Many African languages are trochaic in structure, with an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one. Western languages tend to be iambic, the opposite of African languages. In addition, the number of syllables in the translated versions does not always fit the number of syllables in the originals. Finally, most Africans have trouble singing accidentals, so the tune is often modified, making it sound strange or even unrecognizable to many Westerners (2008:103–6).

dance in worship settings. At the time of this writing, Songhai/Zarma Protestant churches use a generic, mostly Western, style of music. Some are hymns which come out of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries such as ‘Bring Them In’ (Chapter Two, Section 5.2). Others are choruses like ‘He Is the God of Miracles’ (Chapter One, Section 1) or ‘Ensemble Louons le Seigneur’ (Chapter Two, Section 5.2), which arrived in Niger during the 1990s. While some have a desire to bring Nigerien styles of music into the church, there is no well-developed repertoire of songs, styles, and accompaniments based on traditional music (Elders-A 2014, 30:43-31:34; HK 2013, 53:37-54:03).

5.1.4 The Musical Event

In most African societies, music involves more than just singing and the playing of instruments. It is not just words and/or sound. Instead, music is an event which often includes dance, drama, and audience participation (King 2004:297; Nketia 1974:206–217). The activities associated with music are an integral part of the music itself. Thus, music is more of a social event than a ‘concert’ or ‘time of worship’.

At the same time, it is important to note the importance of the lyrics in African Christian music (Thiel 1985:82). Kidula reports from the context of Kenya that, ‘Words are more important than any other musical element.’ (2013:105) While the musical event, with movement, participation, and song is important to many Songhai believers, the words stand out to them (AB 2013, 1:11:36-1:12:35; Elders-A 2014, 21:52-24:54). Felix Muchimba, a Zambian church leader, speaks for all of Africa when he says that as long as Christ is glorified and people are admonished and educated, then what matters most is not the tune, but the lyrics (2008:89). I will return to this point in Chapters Six and Seven.

5.2 Cultures, Change, and Identities

There is no doubt that Nigerien society is in the process of rapid, drastic, and often destabilizing change. Modern jets land on wide, paved runways while many roads remain narrow, rutted, and unpaved. Multi-story mansions sit beside two-room, adobe structures where a family of ten may dwell. Air-conditioned Mercedes race past camels carrying loads of straw. Cell phones revolutionize communication while literacy rates remain low.

While visible, external changes grab one's attention, more deep-seated changes are happening, albeit at a slower rate. Old taboos become less fearsome. Radio, television, and video bring wider understanding of the outside world and a desire for its material goods. Rapid urbanization throws formerly separated people together in random ways and leads to both tension and new levels of cooperation. Islamisation continues. Improvements in medical care contribute to rapid population increases. Change is not a new phenomenon in West Africa, but the changes that are occurring now are broad-based and have a wide impact on the region. How do Africans reshape their identities to take account of their past but also live in the modern world? Keith Eitel expresses the dilemma many face:

> Modern Africans sense a dichotomy which permeates their lifestyle. The advent of modern ways is both challenging and confusing. It is challenging in that African nations want to be involved in the economic, educational, and developmental races … It is confusing because the social structures which give meaning to life itself are sacrificed on the altar of modernism. Many modern Africans are simply in limbo between two worlds, and they opt for a materialistic justification for the pursuit of life and happiness. (1988:323)

These changes in society, I will argue, have an impact on the formation and articulation of a Songhai Christian identity. Often, rapid change leads to a loss or a confusion of identity. In the church in Africa, this may mean wrestling with questions like: How do I express my identity in worship in ways that are both African and Christian? Or, how do I, as a Christian, relate to the music of my cultural background? Or, how does Christian hymnody become incarnate amongst the Songhai? (Muchimba 2008:88)

These questions are important in examining the practice and function of worship music in Songhai/Zarma churches. On the one hand, it is imperative for Songhai believers to take account of culture if they are to be true to their identity and speak to their society. People do not live in a cultural void. 'Worship', according to Muchimba, 'is a cultural experience, and any attempt to separate worship and culture robs each of its identity and significance in the eyes of the Creator. To separate the two is to commit cultural genocide.' (2008:78; Van Opstal 2012:15–16) Several research participants expressed similar sentiments. DA stated that 'Christ did not come to banish our cultural identity.' (2014, #XI-C; TB-B 2013, 49:01-49:17) Other research participants added that we cannot forget who we are (Elders-A 2014, 13:12-15:22; GS 2012, 43:17-44:40; HA2 2016, 53:55-58:37). On the other hand, the Songhai church cannot remain static in a changing world. It has to change with the times and interact with the historical and the modern church. Ed Lapiz expresses this dilemma well:

> We would like the church to be the sanctuary, and not the cemetery, of indigenous culture. And this can happen if the church not only stops rejecting indigenous culture, but actually uses indigenous expressions in contemporary Christian worship. On the other hand, we do not wish to bring the church back to the cave. That is why we contemporize to make songs and rituals work within the context of the church today. (2010:8)

Many Songhai Christians are growing up in urban environments where several languages and cultures are the norm, and they themselves have multiple identities coming from a variety of cultural stimuli. Modern media and telecommunications expose them to a vast smorgasbord of ideas, tastes, and practices. Islam dominates society, and Christians live on the margins. There is the ever-present tension between 'Christ and culture', between one's Songhai identity and one's Christian identity (Niebuhr 1956; Carson 2008). Christians in Niger often live in the liminal place between the traditional and the contemporary, the rural and the urban, the local and the global, the born and the reborn.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained grid/group cultural theory, explored how the disciplines of ethnomusicology and liturgical study contribute to my study, and examined how this research can add to the discussion in both disciplines. Specifically, I have dealt with a definition of ethnomusicology and examined how culture, worship, and identity issues relate to the discipline. In the domain of liturgical study, I have explored a definition of worship and the relationship between worship and culture. I have also briefly looked at worship in the Songhai context. In the next chapter, I will explain my research methodology and the methods I used to collect and analyse my data. Then, in Chapter Five, I will explore the ethnomusicological side of this thesis – the Songhai music-culture. Having laid down a basis for comparison, in Chapter Six I will examine the music-culture of the Songhai Protestant Church – the liturgical/worship side of this thesis. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I will bring the two streams together, looking at the issue of music and identity through the lenses of cultural theory and theology.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will present my research methodology and the methods I used to collect my data. After giving an overview of the research process I will outline my theory of methodology and describe in detail my research methods and the process I used to collect my data. I will conclude with some initial reflections on the data which relate to grid/group cultural theory.

2. Overview of the Research Process

The type of research I conducted, with its dual focus on traditional music in the Songhai culture and music in the Songhai churches, necessitated a flexible and comprehensive approach that looked at the big picture rather than a detailed study of each of its parts. This multi-faceted and multi-sited approach involved using several methods of inquiry with an emphasis on semi-structured interviews and direct observation. I chose these as my main research methods for several reasons. First, they seemed the best fit for the investigation I intended to pursue. Second, they had the advantage of allowing flexibility in my questionnaire design. Since I needed to interview people from different walks of life, the interview questions could be adapted to fit the various situations and subjects. Third, qualitative interviews fit the context better than surveys, historical comparisons, or archival analysis. In the Sahel of Africa, the primary mode of communication is oral. Few people read and write well, and internet access is limited. Finally, while I used case studies in the research, I felt that the case study method by itself could not help me obtain all the data for which I was looking. Rather, the case study method added a richness to the data and helped to corroborate or refute ideas and theories I formulated during the initial interviews and observations.

The research was conducted in three languages: English, Songhai, and French. French is the official language of Mali, Niger, and Benin (Janssen et al. 2014:755–6, 803–4, 820). Songhai is a prominent trade language of north-eastern Mali, western Niger, and northern Benin (Mandryk 2010:147, 564). Working in three languages was difficult and time-consuming. While I am fluent in French and know Songhai well, neither is my mother tongue, and it took a lot of effort, time, and concentration to prepare the questionnaires, transcribe the interviews, and translate relevant portions into English.

To help me in the task of transcription and translation, I employed a research assistant, Abdias Alassane. Abdias is fluent in Songhai, French, and English. He has grown up living and interacting with English-speaking missionaries and has a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Niamey. His desire is to become a translation consultant, and he is often called upon to translate for visitors from English-speaking countries. Abdias helped me correct transcriptions of interviews in Songhai and translate interviews into English. I verified his input by comparing it with what other Songhai Christians said.

Map 4-1: Western Niger Showing Major Cities and Research Sites

Map Credit: Perry-Castañeda Collection, University of Texas Libraries
Public Domain

I conducted most of the research from 2012 to 2016 in seven different locations in Niger: Niamey (the capital city), Téra (a town about 200 km from Niamey where I lived from 1992 to 2008), Damana, Kollo,

Sarando, Tillabéri, and Dosso, as well as in northern Benin (see Map 4-1). I also interviewed someone from Mali via e-mail to get the Songhai perspective from that country. Finally, I talked to several expatriates who have worked amongst the Songhai in Niger, Benin, and Mali.

Before I began my research journey, I learned from Paul Stoller, an anthropologist with extensive experience amongst the Songhai, that research in Niger is problematic and requires sensitivity to the local context, the culture, and the setting of Niger (1987:179). Thomas Hale, another scholar with extensive experience in Niger, confirmed this viewpoint (2010, #XII-A). While many of my research participants were cultural insiders with whom I had already built relationships, others were not, and I tried to maintain ethical standards in my approach to all of them. I sought their permission to do interviews and observations, and I shared openly with them the purpose and extent of the work I was doing.

3. Theory of Methodology

Because my research emphasized phenomena, words, and behaviours rather than figures and controlled experimentation, the overall methodological approach for this study falls into the qualitative research paradigm (Bryman 2008:697; Blaxter et al. 2006:58–65). The preponderance of the research is centred on naturalistic and uncontrolled observation with an accent on subjective experience. Overall, I took an inductive approach to research, which seeks to generate theory from data and test preliminary suppositions rather than to produce generalizable or numerical conclusions. I wanted to get an insider perspective on Songhai music and look for the root causes of a particular phenomenon. Sharan Merriam describes one purpose of qualitative research as ‘clarifying and understanding phenomena and situations when operative variables cannot be identified ahead of time’ (1995:52). This describes my research well.

While following a qualitative research paradigm, I did not want to make a false dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative types of research. While I did not use sophisticated quantitative methods of analysis, some of my data could at times be quantified. For instance, I could count the number of times research participants mentioned a certain musical instrument without my prompting or the number of French or Zarma songs sung in any particular worship service.

Another premise of this research is my epistemological framework. I am neither a positivist nor a constructivist, neither a rationalist nor a relativist, in my approach to a theory of knowledge (Stoller 2009:49). Furthermore, I do not come to my research with a critical deconstructionist view that seeks to change the world in light of perceived conflict or oppression. Neither do I take an extreme post-structuralist position that claims that all reality is derived and relative (Blaxter et al. 2006:60–61). Rather, I come to this research with a critical realist or post-positivist view. I believe one can perceive reality, even if only partially and imperfectly. Sathianathan Clarke says that ethnographic truths are inherently partial (1999:63). Clifford Geertz observes that cultural analysis is never a complete, exact science. Rather, 'anthropological arguments … are like excuses, made up after the stumblings that make them necessary have already happened.' (1973:vi, 29) This thesis may be classified amongst this kind of cultural analysis.

As a researcher, I am subject to bias like anyone else. My perceptions of reality are coloured by my cognitive categories, assumptions, motivations, and feelings (Hiebert 2008:13–22). I witness the world subjectively and from one or more of many angles. My interpretations are coloured by my background, experience, training, presuppositions, and worldview. My theory of knowledge influences how I see the world. To paraphrase Clarke, 'The interpretations presented in this [research] arise from perceptions that are distinctly my own.' (1999:180–81)

While I used my outsider status to investigate the research topic, I do not believe that any researcher can be totally objective or removed from the data and experience. I am always involved in the data, and I influence the data by my presence (Kippen 2008:133; Hiebert 1978:173; Geertz 1973:29–30). This is especially true in a study like this, where I had previously garnered inside information and was known to many of the participants. Anthropologist Paul Stoller, who has studied the Songhai extensively, says that trying to maintain objectivity ('being-here') often constrains us from writing about the reality as people experience it ('being-there'). In his memoir, *The Power of the Between*, he states, '"Being-here" usually compels us to adhere to a set of institutional rules that tend to separate "being-there" from "being-here". The result is that, more often than not, we excise much of the passion of "being-there" from what we write.' (2009:42)

In order to avoid 'excising' that passion, much of my writing is in the first person and includes my personal experiences amongst the Songhai. While my etic perceptions inform the data, I seek to approach an emic perspective of reality without getting caught up in a dualistic emic/etic dichotomy (Hiebert 1996:73–5; Bornand 2005:36–7; Rice 2008:42–61). I believe I can come close to an informed understanding of reality as insiders see it, but my conclusions will always be influenced by my outsider perspectives and my insider status.

Two things I have tried to avoid in this thesis are an exoticism and a sensationalism that highlight differences and reinforce stereotypes people hold about Africa (Agawu 2003:21, 156–63; Berger 2008:66–9; Kidula 2008b:40–48; Bebey 1975:1–3). I want to avoid getting caught up in a kind of ethnocentric prejudice which

overdramatizes my experience in a 'faraway land' (Olivier de Sardan 1992:5).[1] Rather, I want to describe Songhai music in the culture and the church in its richness without drawing unnecessary attention to differences between North American/European and African musics. Furthermore, I want to promote the idea that Christian music can be an authentic expression of African music. Scholars whose presuppositions include an organic unity concept of culture might object to this proposition, but I believe at least some Christian music in Africa can be considered authentic indigenous music (Stipe 1980:166–7; Kidula 2013:1–2). Thus, one of my aims is to study a genre of music that is being grafted into a new context.

My approach to research is eclectic, drawing from several streams of scholarship. On the one hand, I look at the question through a contextual, ethnolinguistic lens (Bornand 2005:23–31). My aim is to study Songhai music within its sociocultural, linguistic, and situational context. I view music not as object, but as culture and cultural practice (Cooley & Barz 2008:19–20). Thus, I will examine the cultural knowledge which gives rise to the manifestation of music and analyse Songhai Christian music through the lens of grid/group cultural theory (Douglas 2007; Feld 1974:212).

On the other hand, I have borrowed from the fields of semiotics and phenomenology. Phenomenology attempts to ground knowledge in experience and puts a strong emphasis on the immediate, concrete, sensory world. For me, musical knowing starts with musical being (Titon 2008:28–34). In this approach I seek to experience music and then describe and analyse it as a cultural phenomenon (White 2001:18; Turner 1972a:396). In studying another's culture, however, there are multiple realities

[1] Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (1992) criticizes anthropologists like Stoller (1987; 1989a; 1989b) and Gibbal (1994) who sensationalise the possession-trance cult amongst the Songhai and write in the first person. While I agree that Stoller and Gibbal tend to overdramatize their experience and the experiences of the Songhai, I believe in a phenomenological approach to research that takes into account the experience and self-reflection of the researcher. I want to retain a balance between sensationalism and a drab, 'objective' style of writing. Thus, most of my writing is in the first person since I am intricately intertwined in the research and experience the music of the Songhai in a profound way.

which are at play. In the realm of music there are the reality of the musician, the reality of the audience, and the reality of the researcher, to mention just three. Researchers must place themselves in a liminal position in the context of the culture and try to discern and describe the multiple realities they see (Stoller 2009:31–4).

As for semiotics, I have borrowed ideas from Clifford Geertz. He sees culture as 'webs of significance' that people have spun for themselves (1973:v, 5). Music is one of these 'webs of significance', and the analytical approach I take is one of searching for meaning in my observations and interpretations. I am not approaching this research from a functionalist perspective. Functionalism is deficient in explaining cultural change (Geertz 1973:142–3). As will become evident, I believe that change is a key factor in explaining the reasons for the types of worship music sung in Songhai/Zarma churches.

In collecting data, I relied heavily on observations and experiences, two key elements of fieldwork. Cooley and Barz define fieldwork as, 'a process that positions scholars as social actors within the very cultural phenomena they study' (2008:4). Jeff Todd Titon identifies fieldwork as the main constituent in a contemporary epistemology of music (2008:25). In this study, however, I do not wish to privilege 'being there' (ontology) over 'knowing that' (epistemology). Rather, I am attempting to find a balance between the two, achieving an understanding and interpretation of Songhai music as part of my long-term connection to Songhai people and their culture (Titon 2008:39–41, 46; Rice 2008:46–8).

Alan Merriam has suggested three approaches to the study of ethnomusicology (1964:41–3), which can be expressed as a dichotomy between opposite poles:

1	Record and analyse music	vs.	Understand music in its cultural context
2	Extensive study (wide survey)	vs.	Intensive study (selection)
3	A search for knowledge	vs.	An attempt to find solutions to problems

Table 4-1: Three Approaches to the Study of Ethnomusicology

While the dichotomies represented in these approaches are not irreconcilable, my approach to the ethnomusicological side of the research has leaned more toward the following poles: understanding Songhai music in its cultural context; doing an extensive study of the traditional and church music; and attempting to find solutions to problems.

4. Methods

4.1 Introduction

In a qualitative inquiry like this, the researcher would normally do some preliminary investigation of the context to determine the best approach to the problem and methods of research. This would be followed by a period of intensive participant observation while learning the language and culture of the people. The researcher would then write an ethnography of the people who are the subjects of the inquiry (Stoller 2009:156–9). Because I had already learned the Songhai language and lived in a remote location for sixteen years, I had met these requirements and achieved a measure of mediation between the roles of cultural insider and cultural outsider before beginning this research (Rice 2008:51). I had observed the Songhai in many different life situations and wrote a simple ethnography of them. In addition, I had laid a foundation for this research by developing strong relationships with Songhai people. Of course, there is always more to learn about my adopted culture. I had never before learned much about the Songhai music-culture, for instance. Nevertheless, I started this research from an advantageous position. I was further along in my grasp of the culture and language than any newcomer and had a broad base from which to begin my inquiry. What follows is an

explanation of the phases in my research journey. I did not conduct these phases in succession, but in overlapping cycles that often returned to earlier methods.

4.2 Research Phases

4.2.1 Secondary Source Material

When I set out on this research journey, I did not have a good grasp of the scholarly literature available in my chosen disciplines. With time, I realised that I was looking at four main topics for reading: Songhai history, music, and culture; ethnomusicology; liturgical study; and contextualization. The first topic involved not only source material on the Songhai and their music but also works on the history and culture of West Africa. I found that while there has been some scholarly work done on the Songhai, there are wide gaps, both synchronic and diachronic, in the literature. Few researchers have written about Songhai culture in detail. Some sources include a chapter or a few paragraphs about the Songhai in works which cover the broad scope of West African history. This research will fill one gap and give a fresh perspective to the scholarly literature on the Songhai and their music.

My main interest lies at the intersection between Songhai culture and Christian worship. Specifically, I am exploring an issue which concerns both ethnomusicologists and liturgical specialists: the relationship between Christian worship music and the traditional musical culture. In order to better understand this relationship and the key thinkers in the field, I needed to read a broad sample of the literature in the disciplines of ethnomusicology and liturgical study. There are far too many works in either discipline to be able to read even a small percentage of them, so I studied the seminal writings from each and read everything I could find on the relationship between the two. Chapter Three is an overview of the literature in these two disciplines.

In the late 1990s, Dave Hall coined the term ‘ethnodoxology’ to describe the use of music and the arts in Christian worship in various cultures around the world (Harris

2013:86). The website of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE) defines ethnodoxology as, ‘The theological and anthropological study, and practical application of how every people group might use their culture’s unique and diverse artistic expressions appropriately to worship the God of the Bible.’ (2014) Ethnomusicologist Rob Baker, who has worked in West Africa, calls it simply ‘the application of ethnomusicology to Christian mission’ (2012:10), although the term includes all the arts, not just music (Calvin Institute of Worship 2009). Ethnodoxology has not gained wide acceptance either in the Christian community or the wider scholarly world as a separate discipline. One Christian ethnomusicologist I talked to stated that he is hesitant to use the term because it excludes non-Christians by definition (DD 2016, 3:11-5:00). Even though the concerns of ethnodoxology overlap with the concerns of this research, I prefer to use the terms ethnomusicology and liturgical study in this thesis.

One final topic that I needed to familiarize myself with was the processes variously know as contextualization, indigenization, or in-/enculturation. This research is not concerned with the process of contextualization. Rather, I wanted to know what is going on in Songhai churches to determine if and to what extent contextualization is needed. Nevertheless, there are two questions in the background of this research: Is the current form of worship the most appropriate for the Songhai church? and What should contextualized worship look like amongst the Songhai? In order to answer these questions, I needed to have some understanding of the scope and nature of the literature on contextualization. Again, there is much information on this topic, and it would be impossible to read it all. Furthermore, a vigorous debate about the nature and extent of contextualization continues in academic and Christian circles. As a result, I read extensively from a wide variety of viewpoints, especially about the contextualization of worship forms.

4.2.2 Worship Surveys

Prior to the start of this research, I had not visited many churches where the Songhai language takes a prominent role in worship. When I lived in Téra, there were only two such churches and both started towards the end of my time there. To get a feel for the songs and musical styles used in these churches, it was necessary to attend services in a variety of churches and observe the liturgy of music. I visited twenty-three churches in Niger and northern Benin from 2012 to 2016. These churches had varying theological viewpoints and drew their members from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. A few churches were in rural areas, but most were located in towns and cities, especially Niamey, Kollo, Dosso, Tillabéri, and Téra. Most Songhai/Zarma churches are in urban centres, and those located in rural areas tend to be small and difficult to reach because of security issues and isolation.

The appellation 'Songhai/Zarma church' needs explanation. Very few churches in western Niger or northern Mali have a membership that is solely, or even largely, Songhai or Zarma (DH & MH1 2014, 6:55-7:29; IH 2014, 1:07:28-1:07:53; HK 2013, 55:49-56:10). Most are multicultural and multilingual; therefore, I carefully selected churches for observation that had at least two of the following characteristics: first, churches with a high percentage of Songhai/Zarma members (>25 per cent); second, churches which used songs in a Songhai dialect; third, churches in which the Songhai language was either the main vehicle for the message or where the message was translated into Songhai; and, fourth, churches where the pastor considers himself ethnically Songhai, Zarma, or Dendi.

Before I conducted an observation, I first visited or called the pastor and/or elders to explain the purpose of my research and the type of observation I intended to do, including recording the music. Often I visited a church twice, first to introduce myself and my research to the leadership, and second to conduct the survey. Every pastor or

leader I contacted was willing and eager to allow his church to be part of the research.

In order to facilitate the observation, I developed a survey form to guide me (see Appendix One). Before conducting any of the surveys, I tested the form at several churches and then refined it. In the survey, I listed the songs sung by the congregation and by groups like the choir, the youth, and the women. Various factors such as the size of the church, the arrangement of the seating, the language of preaching, and the musicians were also noted. I recorded all the music for analysis and review.

4.2.3 Direct Observations of Cultural Music

Over the years I spent in Téra, I attended many cultural celebrations during which music, especially drumming, played a prominent role. I became so accustomed to these ceremonies that I got to know many of the routines thoroughly. The most common of these celebrations were naming ceremonies and weddings (Charry 2000b:199). I will refer to these ceremonies again in Chapter Five. The only other celebration I observed while living in Téra that involved music was the crowning of a new chief (January 2008). This all-day ceremony included many musical troupes, dancers, and singers accompanied by traditional instruments or music played over loudspeakers. At no time in my sixteen years in Téra did any of my close friends or their children sing or play a musical instrument in my presence except in games, lullabies, or while singing along with a recording or some other type of media. I saw no evidence of musical instruments in their homes and rarely saw any of my male friends dance.

While I lived in Téra, one of the most powerful priest-healers (Songhai: *zima*) of the possession-trance cult lived on our street. He would regularly stage possession dances, which we could clearly see and hear from our house. I never attended one of these ceremonies, but I could hear the cries of the adepts as they danced and went into trance. I interviewed this *zima* as part of this research. After we left Téra, I attended a

possession-trance ceremony in Niamey on 27 February 2014 and made a list of observations. I will comment more on this ceremony in Chapter Five, Section 3.1

4.2.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

In the main phase of the research, I interviewed people who identify themselves as Songhai, Zarma, or Dendi, both Christians and non-Christians. I was able to speak with a total of 102 people, mostly individuals, but some small groups of two or three and three larger groups of five, ten, and twenty respectively. Of these, 64 people identified as Christian and 38 as non-Christian. I conducted a total of 80 interviews (including follow-up interviews). In choosing people to interview, I used theoretical and purposive sampling rather than random sampling (Bryman 2008:183–5, 458–62). Some call this 'snowball sampling', but Irving Seidman calls it 'maximum variation sampling', which refers to a range of people and sites which is fairly well distributed across a population (2006:52). Starting with people I knew, I proceeded to others recommended by research participants and colleagues. The participants included men and women; old and young; church leaders and members; Songhai, Zarma, and Dendi; people from Niger, Mali, and Benin; musicians and non-musicians; urban and rural; those with formal schooling and those without; people with differing socio-economic and theological backgrounds; and people from different Christian denominations. While this method of sampling makes it problematic to generalize the findings, it worked well for this study because the sampling frame for the population is large and difficult to define (Bryman 2008:183–4). In addition, I am more interested in theoretical sampling than random or representative sampling. Thus, snowball sampling fit within the qualitative research framework I was pursuing.

One important category of Songhai people is musicians. The research amongst musicians took much time and patience. The *jesere, zima*, and others responsible for music in Songhai society can be sensitive and secretive about their professions and do

not divulge information readily to outsiders or even to most Songhai (Hale 1998:190–92; SH 2016, #I). It is difficult to get them to respond to questions without taking time to build relationships or knowing someone who could introduce you to them. Because of my insider status, I was able to conduct in-depth interviews with three *zimas*, three *jesere*, and three *tradi-moderne* musicians. I also interviewed five Christian Songhai musicians who did not have any inhibitions about sharing their views with me.

One limitation of this research was my access to women. Because of the highly-differentiated gender roles and spaces in Songhai, Nigerien, and Islamic society, I was restricted in gaining an *entrée* to women. I worked hard to get the perspective of as many as possible, and, in the end, I was able to interview 23 women. Still, I had to be creative in finding ways to approach them without giving any semblance of impropriety. Often, I interviewed them in public or in small groups. This had the distinct disadvantage of many interruptions and noises in the immediate vicinity as people came and went about their daily tasks. Several women I interviewed in mixed groups with men. For two others, their husbands were present, not because I had planned it that way, but because they were there, and it would have been awkward not to include them. I knew eight of the women before I started this research, but the rest were new to me. I would have liked to have interviewed more women, but because I scrupulously avoided offending anyone, less than one-quarter of the participants were women. I will have to leave it to female colleagues and scholars to investigate more thoroughly the musical culture amongst Songhai women.

Another limitation was access to non-Christians. I chose to interview people in three places where I had a fairly easy *entrée*: Téra, the town where I formerly lived, inhabited mainly by Songhai; Damana, a small Zarma town east of Niamey and the home of Abdias' parents; and Niamey itself, which has a mixture of Zarma and Songhai and where I am quite well known.

In addition to the interviews with insiders to the Songhai culture, I conducted several interviews with scholars and missionaries, 'outsiders' who have invested a great deal in Niger or the Songhai. There were eight of these. One was the scholar Thomas Hale, who did extensive research on Songhai traditions and West African griots in the 1980s and 1990s (TH 2010). Another scholar was Caryn Benitez, an ethnomusicologist who spent a number of years working in Niger up to 2013 (CB 2012). I also interviewed an African ethnomusicologist on 17 September 2016 in Parakou, Benin (DD 2016). I further conducted formal and informal interviews with five missionaries working amongst the Songhai – two from the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptists (PC-A 2010; PC-B 2011; MP 2016) and three from the former Evangelical Baptist Mission (EBM) (CO 2012; DH & MH1 2014).

In order to facilitate the interview process, I developed and tested a questionnaire in French, with variations for Christians and non-Christians. I adapted a model from Albert Friesen which is particularly appropriate to my research. Friesen proposes two types of questions which help the researcher understand and evaluate another's music: ethnomusicological questions and 'psychoethnomusicological' questions. Ethnomusicological questions are intended to solicit information about song types, musical instruments, musicians, and dance. Psycohoethnomusicological questions involve gauging the relationship of the people being studied to their music and evaluating the suitability of song types and instruments for various uses (1982:85–9; McGann 2002:37–57; Titon & Slobin 2001:14–24; Bebey 1975; Baldridge 1999; Garba 1992:20–21). I wrote my questionnaires based on these two types of questions and classed all the questions under four headings:

1. What traditional Songhai instruments are currently being used and who plays them?

2. On what occasions do Songhai people sing and dance today?

3. Who are the musicians and what are their roles in the church/society?

4. To what extent does the church/society use/perform traditional Songhai music?

(See Appendix Two)

In addition to these questions, I asked Christians to give me their definition of worship and describe the role music plays in worship. This questionnaire served as a guide to interviewing. While I followed the general outline of the four questions, I did not adhere strictly to the script, but allowed the participants to express themselves fully in answer to the questions. My research assistant and I translated the questionnaires from French into Songhai. We found it difficult to translate the meaning of concepts like 'worship', 'musical instrument', 'tune', and 'compose' since these words do not have close equivalents in Songhai. Consequently, in some of the first interviews I had to explain what I meant and ask for help to express the concepts.

I did not generally ask 'why' questions. There are several reasons for this. 'Why' questions are sometimes difficult for insiders to answer. Often, a person inside the culture accepts the way things are without wondering 'why'. Another reason the 'why' question is difficult is that it is fairly direct. In Africa, it is often better to use an indirect approach, such as asking people to tell a story about themselves or their family. In addition, one must listen carefully to the answers to questions in order to hear what people are inferring by the words and phrases chosen. Inferences can be very significant in a culture where indirect speech is the norm. An outsider will not generally pick up all the nuances in indirect speech. Abdias helped me immensely in this regard with the transcription and interpretation of the interviews in Songhai. He caught many inferences that I missed. I did not ignore the 'why' question altogether. I did ask it directly if I felt that it was important and would not bring offence, but I often tried to get at the 'why' question by using a range of related questions. Thus the fourth question involves more of a 'how' or 'to what extent' type of questioning than a 'why' (Yin 2008:106).

Before conducting each interview, I explained the research and its implications to the participant(s). Following my framework for research ethics, I emphasized the issues of confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation. Because a few of the participants could be placed in an awkward position if they were associated with a research project like this and because the political situation in the Sahel of West Africa is so precarious, I decided to refrain from using proper names or contact information for all research participants. Instead, I used initials to identify them as described in Chapter One, Section 4.3. The reader may refer to that chapter to recall how I have cited them.

Before starting each interview, I had the participant sign an informed consent statement indicating their understanding of the parameters of the research and their agreement to participate (see Appendix Three). When the person was illiterate, I had them put their mark on the consent form, or I recorded their oral consent to the interview. In a few cases, such as phone conversations or spontaneous interviews, I found myself without a recorder and could not get the participant to sign the consent form. I always asked for permission to use the words and concepts in my research and writing. Most of the interviews were recorded, but a few were transcribed in my field notebook and transferred to my computer soon after the interview.

My interviewing technique was not flawless or without bias. I had never done extensive interviewing like this before, and I learned as I went along. More than once I caught myself asking leading questions or interrupting a participant. I sometimes talked about myself and my ideas. There were also intrusions during the interviews (greetings, overlapping voices, street sounds) because many of them took place in public places. I filtered out junk questions and used the material that presented the voices of real people without my interference as much as possible (Weiss 1995:66–83; Reck et al. 2001:297–9). In addition, I continually questioned myself and my procedures and listened to feedback from my participants (Gittins 1989:19–20).

After conducting each interview, I transcribed it using software from Express Scribe. The process took much longer than I expected because of the three languages involved. Nancy and Abdias helped with some transcription, but I did most of the work. I transcribed each interview in its entirety, including pauses and repetitions of words. I then checked all the Songhai transcriptions with Abdias to correct my initial draft and to bring out the inferences I may have missed.

Because most of the interviews were in French or Songhai, I had to decide how much interview data should be translated into English. Time constraints and the lack of available people who know English well brought me to the conclusion that it would be impossible to translate all the data collected. Therefore, after initial coding and highlighting of the interviews, I chose to translate only portions that met one of two criteria: those that were particularly helpful in answering one of my four main questions and those that gave me a new insight into the interpretation of the Songhai and church music-cultures. To minimise bias and increase the reliability and validity of the data, I instructed Abdias to make initial translations into English of cited interview portions on his own. We then reviewed the translations together to smooth out rough areas and make them readable.

Analysis of the interview data was accomplished using an open coding system. I developed a list of codes (see Appendix Four), which were mostly of the types Johnny Saldaña calls attribute, descriptive, values, evaluation, and hypothesis coding (2009:55–8, 70–73, 89–93, 97–101, 123–6; Neuman 1999:461–2). For each interview, I highlighted key texts which related to my interview questions and assigned a code or codes to each text consisting of a number and a few words. I also coded important information about participants and their answers to the four main questions on Excel spreadsheets for comparison purposes (see data charts in the bibliography). As time went on, I began to formulate theories as to why the Songhai have difficulty creating

worship music inspired by their traditional music-culture (listed with an 'H' – for 'hypothesis' – in Appendix Four). I was then able to turn around and test these theories in further interviews and in church case studies. As the research progressed, I proceeded to a higher level of coding, comparing codes and grouping them together in categories in a kind of pattern coding, developing major themes and explanations coming out of the research (Saldaña 2009:152–5). These categories accounted for major parts of the data, including the grouping of explanations into five cultural and historical factors, and they are the subject of Chapters Five, Six, and Seven.

4.2.5 Case Studies

According to Donna Zucker, a case study is 'a systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest' (2009:171–3). Phillip Tovey posits that case studies have special value within a wider comparative methodological framework in the study of Christian worship (2004:160). Robert Yin further writes that the case study method is particularly useful in situations where the researcher seeks to explore a 'why' or a 'how' question. Case studies, he says, are suitable for researching a phenomenon over which the researcher has little or no control and for undertaking in-depth description and analysis of that particular phenomenon in a real-life context. Yin further delineates three purposes of case study research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (2008:2–8; Rudestam & Newton 2007:50). Some of my research questions lent themselves well to the descriptive type of research, which answers a 'what' question, while others leaned more toward an explanatory approach, answering a 'why' question. These two approaches rendered the case study method a good fit for this study.

In order to better describe and explain, as well as understand, church music in the Songhai context, I did case studies of three churches where I had already done observations (Stake 1978:7). Because I had not previously spent much time in

Songhai/Zarma churches, I needed to have some continued exposure to Christian ideas about worship and music in order to verify my initial observations and experiences and ask questions about what I had seen and heard. My aim was to get a more in-depth understanding of and exposure to worship in a few churches. I also collected a large sample of the repertoire of each church so I could compare it with the repertoires of other churches. In addition, I wanted to know the members of a few church communities better and have extended interaction with them. Once I collected the data, I wrote a separate report for each case study. I then merged the data from the case studies with the data from worship surveys and interviews. Much of the richness of the data and thick description comes from the case studies, and it would have been hard to obtain some information using other methods. I further outline my objectives in doing the case studies in Appendix Five, Section A ('Case Study Protocol').

The choice of the three churches for the case studies was neither random nor haphazard. Rather, the criteria for selecting the churches were purposive and dependent on several factors. First, I chose churches I had already visited in the initial worship surveys. Second, I looked for churches that gave me different perspectives on the church-going Protestant Songhai/Zarma population. One church represented the older, mission-founded denominations, which have a more conservative, non-charismatic theology. It was the Evangelical Baptist Church in the Goudel neighbourhood of Niamey (EBCG). A second church belonged to the Assemblies of God, a more recently established denomination in Niger with a charismatic/Pentecostal theology. It was located in the district of Kombo in Niamey (AGK). The third church was outside the city limits, which gave the study a rural perspective. This church was the Hosanna Church of Kollo (HCK). The HCK is also an African Initiated Church (AIC). All the churches in the case studies were in Zarma areas, but they all had a membership drawn from several nations and ethnolinguistic groups. The fourth criterion was that I wanted

to study churches of different sizes. One church was fairly large (the EBCG) with about 70 members. The HCK was a medium-sized church with about 40 members, and the AGK was the smallest church at around 20 members.

The procedure I used for each case study was as follows. After receiving permission from the church leaders to conduct the case study, I attended worship services at the church on four Sundays within a period of two months. At least three Sundays were consecutive. Each Sunday, I carefully observed the entire worship service. I concentrated my observations on the singing, both by the congregation and by choirs, and noted the types of songs sung, the musical instruments used, the musicians, and the languages of worship. I used the same survey form I had drawn up for the initial worship surveys as a basis for these observations (see Appendix One) and recorded everything but the sermon. This was true participant observation, where I joined fully in the service. Sometimes I sang a song using my guitar to accompany myself or preached a message in the church. To increase the reliability of the observations, I had my research assistants, Abdias and Nancy, observe some services and make field notes, adding a second and a third pair of eyes and ears to verify my findings (Yin 2008:110). I explained the observation form to them and mentored them in taking notes on the service. My purpose in doing this multiple times was to become more familiar with the worship style of the church and to get a better sample of the total repertoire of music and the 'musical craft' of the church (McGann 2002:45–6).

In addition to the observations, I conducted focus-group interviews with three key demographic groups in the EBCG and the HCK: the women, the youth, and the leadership. I interviewed the entire AGK church after one morning service. During each interview, I played three songs, two in French and one in Zarma to gauge their appeal and suitability in the Songhai/Zarma church setting. Each song was from a different style and tradition. Chapter Six, Section 4.3, provides more detail about these songs and

the way I used them, and Appendix Five presents my case study reports, including the protocol I used to conduct the case studies.

The questions for the focus group interviews were similar to those I used during the semi-structured interviews, but I reworked them to elicit answers to my 'why' questions. So, for example, in the category of musical instruments, I sought to find out what traditional instruments are acceptable for church worship and why believers accept some and reject others. As for songs, I wanted to know if songs in Zarma were preferable to songs in French and why so many songs are composed by outsiders. This line of questioning provoked a defensive reaction on the part of some (Women 2015, #III-B; Elders 2015, 47:45-48:32). They misunderstood what I was asking and thought I was implying that there were no Christian songs in Songhai. I realised I needed to modify the question and ask who is currently writing songs and tunes within the church and explain that the tunes I hear are largely borrowed from other cultures. This defensive reaction is one reason Yin suggests that it may be better to ask a 'how' question rather than a 'why' question in interviews (2008:106). When it came to questions about musicians, I wanted to know if the group members knew anyone from the Songhai/Zarma community who is currently composing songs. I also wanted to know church people who could play traditional instruments. Additionally, I wanted to know if the group thought that singing was essential to worship. Finally, I tried to find out what the group thought about a definition of worship and the role of music in worship.

In addition to observations and focus group interviews, I also examined one artefact, the church songbook at the EBCG. Written documents are rare in many African churches, but this hymnbook, entitled the *Zarma Baytu Tira* (*Zarma Hymnbook*) (AA et al. 1994), was a gold mine of information on many of the most commonly-used Zarma songs in church. It gave me great insight into the origins of tunes as well as the musical

repertoire of the church. Most churches I attended over the course of this research had neither a songbook nor a power point to aid in congregational singing. In these churches, all the songs were memorized, and they represented the standard fare sung in most evangelical churches in the region.

In order to verify the findings of my research in each of the churches where I conducted the case studies, I took preliminary reports back to the churches and asked the churches to give feedback on them. For the EBCG and the HCK, I reported my findings to the elders, and for the AGK, I reported them to the entire church. Each church gave me useful feedback and corrections. I did this to minimise bias and check the internal validity of my interpretations.

4.2.6 Music Lessons on the *Moolo*

In 1960 Mantle Hood wrote a ground-breaking article in *Ethnomusicology* to propose that scholars learn to play an instrument or sing as a way of studying other musics (1960; Schrag 1989:313). He called this becoming 'bi-musical'. This has become a common method of inquiry and fieldwork for many ethnomusicologists. In order to get more of an emic perspective on Songhai music and have more contact with musicians, I took lessons on the *moolo* (a three-stringed lute) during 2016 and 2017. I made contact with musicians at the CFPM in Niamey

Photo 4-1: *Moolo* Lesson

Credit: Nancy DeValve

and commissioned the making of a *moolo*. Then I contracted with a *moolo* player to give me lessons (see Photo 4-1).

I chose the *moolo* for a variety of reasons. First, it is a chordophone similar to the guitar, which I play. It corresponds to my tastes and talents but is still authentically Songhai. Second, there is little stigma attached to the instrument. In fact, it was used by the respected *jesere* class of musicians and is still played today. It is not associated with slaves and lower-class people as the *dondon* (a double-headed pressure drum) often is. Neither is it associated with the possession-trance cult. Third, the instrument is rarely used. I have only seen it played on a few occasions. I wanted to see if I could find a way to introduce the instrument in non-traditional settings. Finally, I wanted to get an insider perspective on Songhai music and become at least partially bi-musical. Learning the *moolo* helped me experience and understand the sounds and beauty of Songhai music and acquainted me with the traditional repertoire and genres. This knowledge has also led to a deeper understanding of Songhai culture itself. A video clip of a *moolo* lesson I had can be found here: http://bit.ly/2mTCAfR.

5. Validity and the Dependability of the Analysis

I have already mentioned several strategies I used to insure the internal validity and the dependability of my data and analysis, but I will summarize them here. First, I employed multiple investigators, sources of data, and methods to confirm or refute emerging findings. I conducted research at seven different sites with people from many levels of society. For some data collection, I had research assistants who gave their insights into the situation. Second, I took much of the data and my interpretations of it back to the sources for verification or refutation. I did this especially with the case studies, as this phase of the research took much time and involved large numbers of people. Third, I gave drafts of my chapters to peers and colleagues for review to check the plausibility of the interpretations and the presence of possible bias. One was a

Western scholar who lives in Niger and has a great knowledge of the Songhai language. The second was a retired man with a doctorate in education. The third was my wife, who knows the Songhai language and culture well. Fourth, I was immersed and highly engaged in the research process. I collected data over an extended period of time and tried to insure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, I have disclosed my assumptions, experience, and biases in this research. I cannot completely eliminate these, but I have tried to keep a proper balance between subjectivity and objectivity (Merriam 1995:53–6; Zucker 2009:179–80; Tellis 1997:8).

External validity, or generalizability, is harder to insure in this research because I have only examined a cross-section of Songhai musical culture. Furthermore, my sampling techniques and methodological framework do not permit me to claim that this research is statistically generalizable. Rather, the audience of the research will determine the generalizability of the research to their specific situations. I will further generalize the data to theory in Chapter Seven (Yin 2008:14, 39; Tellis 1997:5; Stake 1978:6). I have tried to insure the external validity of the research through the following techniques: first, thick description of events and phenomena; second, multi-site designs involving different places, cases, and situations; third, descriptions of how typical an event, program, or sample are within the research; and finally, studying the component parts of the organizations and phenomena in question. These strategies insure that the analysis of the data is applicable to many people and situations not included in this study (Merriam 1995:57–9; Geertz 1973:3–30).

On 17 January 2016, I made a field note on one interview that my early research concentrated on the people and artefacts involved in Songhai music and not so much on the ideas about music, the genres, and the social context (IO 2016). My bias was toward concrete, empirical phenomena. Nevertheless, many of the less tangible elements of Songhai music came out in the interviews and observations and were confirmed by

participants in the later stages of the research. I believe the conclusions I have reached are reliable, but they will always require further testing and refinement.

6. Grid/Group Theory and Five Subcultures

As I collected data during interviews and observations, I started looking for possible explanations for the preference for borrowed forms of worship music. I identified twenty-one of them. These are marked with an 'H' (for hypothesis) on the code sheet in Appendix Four. As I progressed through the research, I realised the explanations could be grouped around five historical and cultural forces shaping people's lives (see further explanation about the evolution of my thinking in Appendix Four and in Appendix Five, Section A, Subsection 3: 'Rival Answers/Explanations for My Research Question'). These five subcultures are acting as change agents on the Songhai church. All five are in the process of change themselves, and all five are refashioning people's identities. They are the traditional Songhai subculture, the Protestant Christian subculture, the Islamic culture of West Africa, the Nigerien national/political subculture, and the global/modern/Western culture shaped by tastes and styles in United States and Europe. Each of these subcultures can be mapped to one of the types of social bias in Douglas' typology of grid and group (see Chapter Seven, Section 2).

Secondary sources corroborate the interview data about the influence of the five cultural forces on musical preference. Mahaman Garba states that the political culture of Niger has profoundly shaped the music-culture of the country since independence, especially in comparison with Mali, Guinea, and Senegal (1992:13–14). He further claims that Islam and the West have both interfered with the traditional culture (1992:61–2). Nketia deals with the influence of the same three subcultures as well as the interaction between neighbouring African cultures (1974:4–15). Thomas Hale, for his part, discusses the powerful hegemonic influence that both the West and Islam have had on traditional music (1990:115–6, 170). Finally, Jean Kidula mentions all five types of

cultures with respect to music in the African church. She says that 'the twentieth century forced a reworking of identity for most African groups. No longer did individuals identify themselves only according to language or ethnic group; they were forced into countries subdivided by European colonial powers.' (2008b:51) Furthermore, they had to identify themselves as Anglophone, Francophone, or Lusophone. They had to align themselves with Islam, Christianity, or indigenous religions. Social classes emerged related to these new identities. Thus, the supposition that these five subcultures have had a dramatic effect on Protestant Songhai worship finds support in the literature.

I am arguing that each of these five cultural forces has had and is having a profound impact on the Songhai church. Music forms a part of all five subcultures, with clashing musical interests, choices, and preferences in each of them. The church struggles to respond well to all the cultural voices in a comprehensive and balanced way. Sometimes it finds itself in the position of choosing one or two of the subcultures over another. In Chapter Seven, I will argue from cultural theory that issues of identity related to these subcultures are a key to understanding the current repertoire of worship music in Songhai churches.

In the next two chapters I will examine in depth the music of two of these subcultures: the traditional Songhai music-culture and the Protestant Songhai music-culture. I have already briefly described the Islamic subculture and the political/national subculture of Niger in Chapter Two, and many scholars have dealt with the former. As for the Western/global/modern culture, I assume that my readers already have a fair understanding of it and its effects on the world. Since these latter three subcultures are more well-known and studied, I will not treat them as extensively as the other two. In Chapter Seven, I will return to the question of the five subcultures and their influence on Songhai Christian musical preference. I will argue that the five cultural influences

and the changes occurring in each of them necessitate a different model for grid/group cultural theory. The model I propose is based on the three-dimensional DNA molecule. Applied to the cultural and spiritual domains, this model will, I believe, better account for the complexities of the Songhai context.

7. Conclusion

This research project is a qualitative study of a human phenomenon: Christian worship in a particular setting. I approach the problem holistically, trying to get an understanding of the big picture through the examination of different parts of worship (Rudestam & Newton 2007:37). While many of the 'parts' of this study (musical instruments; musical occasions; musicians; Christian worship events; and issues such as identity, community, and change) have been treated elsewhere by other scholars, bringing them together in one place will inform and renew the dialogue about worship in the Protestant church. While few of the insights from the research will constitute new information for most Songhai/Zarma, the juxtaposition of the elements of the research will shed new light on the issue for insiders and help outsiders understand and grapple with the issue of the suitability of worship practices in different cultures (Hendershott 2009:56, 64).

I come at the research problem with a critical realist epistemology and a series of four methods designed to complement each other and look at the data from different angles. This chapter outlines the main methods used, which were observations and interviews, but case studies, readings from secondary sources, and lessons on the *moolo* served to corroborate or refute findings from the main methods. This methodology was demanding and time-consuming, especially when one considers that it was conducted in three languages. Nevertheless, the approach and methods contributed to the holistic nature of the research.

Chapters Five and Six constitute a presentation of my research findings. There are several questions I was asking as I looked at my data. First, what does the traditional Songhai music-culture look like? Second, to what extent does the traditional music-culture influence contemporary society, and how does the society influence it? Third, what is the role of traditional music in society? These questions are the subject of Chapter Five. I needed to answer them in order to lay a foundation for a comparison with the Protestant Songhai music-culture in Chapter Six. There I will deal with questions like, How do Songhai Christians express their worship of God in song? Why do they use certain styles, genres, tunes, and instruments? How should believers best express their Christian and Songhai identities in music? and What, if any, is the role of traditional music in the church? I now turn to a description and interpretation of the Songhai music-culture.

Chapter Five: Traditional Songhai Music-Culture

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will describe and analyse the traditional Songhai music-culture, which comes out of a strong group/strong grid orientation. In the process, I will fill some gaps in knowledge about that culture. I will group important cultural elements together so that the reader will have a brief, but comprehensive synopsis of what Songhai people in the early twenty-first century identify as their music. After outlining some ideas many contemporary Songhai have about music, I will proceed to examine four key elements of a music-culture (Chapter 4, Section 5.2.4): musical occasions/genres, musical instruments, musicians, and dance.

2. Ideas about Music

A first step in looking at the Songhai music-culture is to identify their ideas about music. First, I will look at the conceptualization of music in Songhai culture. I will then proceed to examine a Songhai concept of aesthetics. Finally, I will take a brief look at the changing roles of music through the lens of four of the five historical and cultural influences that I mentioned in Chapter Four (Section 6). The ideas presented here are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, they represent main themes emerging from the research data.

2.1 What is Music?

Like many African languages, Songhai has no word for ‘music’. It has words for singing, dancing, and musical genres, but the language has no generic words for ‘music’ or ‘musical instrument’ (Stone 2004:15; Garba 1992:164; HA2 2016, 1:04:02-1:04:32; Nettl 2005:15–20). I do not wish, however, to overemphasize the differences between Indo-European and African languages in their musical vocabulary (Agawu 2003:20–21; Stone 2008:7–8). Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible, did not have

separate words for singing and music, either (Gelineau 1992:498). My point is that the concept of music amongst the Songhai has, until recently, often been tied to specific events (Garba 1992:127; Whelan 1983:177–8). For example, it would be inconceivable to have a wedding without a certain type of rhythm, song, and dance. Thus, in the past 'music' was part of a larger event, and one could usually ascertain the nature of the event by listening to the 'music' (Muchimba 2008:42). Music was thus a part of the normal rhythms of life.

Traditional Songhai music is directed to an oral culture and is a sensory experience. It involves all the senses, but it has a particular aural dimension. It is something to be listened to, something to be heard and felt (HK 2013, 1:05:07-1:06:48; MB2 2012, 1:08:57-1:10:03; Nettl 1985:156; Kidula 2013:229). In Western contexts, while music is aural, it is also understood as visual, printed in a book or noted in a score. This is not the case for the Songhai. The words sung by a *jesere* stand out more than the musical accompaniment or melody. The stories and genealogies he recites must be heard above the sound of musical instruments or songs.

Moreover, words have power. They carry weight and have an ill-defined, mysterious force (Hale 1998:120–21; Maiga & Maiga 1978:35; Olivier de Sardan 1976:18; Rouget 1985:315). That power may be translated into rich rewards for the *jesere* as he sings the praises of the listener, causing him to tremble with conflicting emotions of delight and fear. The listener may be so moved that he or she will present the *jesere* a generous gift in compensation for his acclaim (MS2 2013, 5:37-6:14; MN 2012, 42:00-44:44; Bornand 2004b:101–2). In addition, the words of a *jesere* may incite a freeborn person to acts of bravery, courage, perseverance, and daring (AM1 2013, 29:06-30:10).

Scholars have noted an important correlation between tone and meaning in many African languages. Many say that traditional African music preserves the tones of the

original words and that without an adherence to this principle, the meaning of a song is often ambiguous or misunderstood (Jones 1976:18, 29; Nketia 1974:184–8; Garba 1992:152–6; Chernoff 1981:75–80). Kofi Agawu argues, however, that this is not entirely true. Depending on the language and context, while the meaning may be somewhat distorted, it will not necessarily be misunderstood (2003:106–112; Locke 2001:72). As a Malian proverb states, 'The tune is bad, but the meaning of the words is very pleasing.' (Quoted in Anderson 2006:137) My observations of Songhai worship music seem to support Agawu's contention, even with borrowed tunes and translated words. While the tones of the language are important, people often understand the meaning of a song even when the tune does not match the tones.

In analysing my research notes, one important concept of the Songhai music-culture I discovered is that, aside from the liturgical genre, music is generally associated with celebration (HM3 & AI2 2016, 31:48-32:23; HM4 2016, 30:10-30:58; GV 2016, 23:43-24:24; HB 2015, 9:45-10:27). Nowhere does this idea become clearer than in funeral rites. With the rare exception of a chief or important official, the Songhai/Zarma do not sing, dance, or play musical instruments when someone dies. It is not considered appropriate to have music on sad occasions. Rather, one should reflect on life and remain quiet. (MD2 2014, #III-J; HM2 2015, 34:55-35:36; AB 2013, 46:53-49:02). While this practice may be partly the result of Islamisation, it is in stark contrast to some nearby cultures (Hendershott 2009; BK3 2014, #III-J).

For the Songhai, music is a shared experience. According to Mahaman Garba, music is the interaction between musicians, instruments, singers, and spectators (1992:174; Nketia 1974:21–4). As a part of community life, it is participatory. While not everyone is a music specialist, most can sing, dance, clap, or play instruments at a basic level. In addition, music is often performed in the open, amidst crowds of people

(Nketia 1974:27–30; Kidula 2008b:50). Music is thus something you do, not just something you listen to (Stone 2008:9; Muchimba 2008:54–6; Agawu 2003:206–207).

Songhai/Zarma music has a particular identity. While it has many parallels with the music of the neighbouring Mande and Hausa peoples, it has its own character. One research participant stated that 'Zarma people are more complicated than Hausa people because Zarma people do not accept what is foreign to their environment.' (HK 2013, 58:49-58:56; BK2 2013, 3:09-4:30; DA 2014, #II) Another participant, a musician, stressed that the Zarma do have something unique to contribute to world musics (TB-B 2013, 58:22-59:07). The rest of this chapter will flesh out that unique Songhai musical identity.

2.2 Songhai Aesthetics

Aesthetics have to do with the notion of beauty or taste (McGann 2002:63). Nicholas Wolterstorff explains how Westerners tend to see art through the lens of pure aesthetics as an abstract object of contemplation. He argues that art also has a functional character. Works of art, he says, are instruments and objects of action, not just of contemplation. They are a means to an end as well as an end in itself (1980:x, 3, 24). Some would argue that Africans are more concerned with the usefulness of an item or product than its pleasing qualities. There is no doubt that traditional Songhai music often has a functional character. It is usually associated with an occasion or event and fulfils a particular purpose (Garba 1992:155–9).

I would argue, however, that it is best to see every culture and person at some point on a continuum between belief in the extremes of pure aesthetics and utilitarianism (Kidula 2008b:46; Agawu 2003:98–106; Besmer 1983:56). Songhai music has definite effects on people. Several research participants have described how much they enjoy listening to the traditional story-telling of the *jesere*. It gives them a sense of identity, and the impressive oratory creates a good feeling for the listeners

(AM1 2013, 30:38-31:12; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 20:31-21:58). Thus, music is not only useful to Songhai people. It also has charm and beauty. It is an art form, especially an oral art, with its poetry, proverbs, and stories (AB 2013, 20:45-21:57; HK 2013, 44:28-44:44).

In my interviews with Songhai people and musicians, I found that the quality of the voice is less important than the ability to speak clearly and well in public and recite long epics and genealogies. The musicians held in highest esteem are singers and story-tellers who have a good memory and a powerful way with words (AB 2013, 53:49-54:49; EK-A 2013, 20:26-20:55; HK 2013, 51:22-51:45). Their voices may not be 'beautiful', but they know how to build up their listeners through praise and narration (MS1 in DA 2014, #XXII-C; Whelan 1983:176–7).

Another aspect of Songhai aesthetics concerns musical instruments. Because words are so important, the volume of the musical accompaniment needs to be measured and quiet. Aside from the traditional liturgical and modern *tradi-moderne* music, most other genres were meant for small groups around a fire at night or for the king and his court. One musician I interviewed stated emphatically that music is not meant to be loud and boisterous (AB 2013, 1:08:20-1:09:10). While it is possible to modify some traditional instruments for amplification, they are fragile and were not intended to be attached to a sound system.

At the same time, another research participant testified to the power of chordophones for the Songhai, especially the one-string fiddle known as the *gooje*. This instrument evokes potent emotive reactions in listeners (DA 2014, #VI-D & #IV-E; Stoller 1989a:111). Having heard the *gooje* when I lived in Téra and attended a traditional liturgical ceremony, I can testify to the feeling of raw power that this instrument exudes. Unlike many other instruments, its music is loud and penetrating.

In general, music amongst the Songhai exhibits a dominance of rhythmic elements with a preponderance of percussion instruments. This is not to say that melodic elements are unimportant or that rhythm is secondary in other parts of the world (Bebey 1975:92; Agawu 2003:55–61; Garba 1992:164). Rather, it is a fact that for functional and historical reasons, one usually hears and sees rhythmic elements in African music even when melodic ones are not present (Baker 2012:29; Kidula 2008b:42; Elders 2015, 13:32-15:00). As I will show, nine of the thirteen instruments that form part of the traditional Songhai music-culture are either membranophones or idiophones.

In Songhai aesthetics, repetition is important. Examples of this are the recurrence of a musical motif in the melody or rhythm of an instrument, the echo of a refrain or phrase in call and response songs, or the recitation of names and genealogies in epic poetry. As in much contemporary music, repetition is a vital element of the musical style. It reinforces the message and helps people remember the words. This is particularly important in an oral culture, where few can read or write well (MB1 2012, 14:52-15:36; Ong 1977:418, 424).

According to Mahaman Garba, most traditional Nigerien music, including that of the Songhai, uses a pentatonic scale (1992:158). This is confirmed by other sources (Charry 2000b:294; Baker 2012:57), and when I took lessons on the *moolo*, I never used more than five notes in any song (OH 2016).

2.3 The Changing Roles of Music

Songhai music has changed dramatically since the advent of colonialism. Today, there are a plethora of ideas influencing the role of music and the praxis of musical styles and repertoires. Four of the five subcultural forces mentioned in Chapter Four contribute to the contemporary conceptualization of music in Songhai culture: tradition, Islam, Westernization/globalization, and the political culture of the nation-state. The first two

fall into the strong group/strong grid category of Douglas' typology. The latter two come from a weak group/weak grid cultural bias.

Traditional music, the subject of this chapter, is on the decline amongst the Songhai. Young people do not want to take up the profession because it is not respected. Rather, it is associated with the lower classes, former slaves, and 'animists' (AB 2013, 1:19:33-1:20:11; MG-B 2013, #III; MS1 2010, #X). Many research participants, however, seem to be of two minds about this music. On the one hand, they enjoy listening to a good story or dancing at weddings. On the other hand, they despise the musician and his or her perceived reputation (IH 2014, #I; MB1 2012, 1:02:17-1:02:30; EK-A 2013, 18:55-19:20). Traditional music still fulfils the three roles of emotional expression, communication, and validation of social institutions and religious rituals that I outlined in Chapter Three, Section 3.1.4, but other musics are rapidly replacing or merging with it and fulfilling similar or complementary roles.

Islam has been present in the Sahel for centuries in its Sufi and Sunni forms. Only recently, however, with a shift to stricter interpretations of Islam emerging from Wahhabism, have conflicting attitudes towards musical praxis emerged amongst the Songhai (Kartomi 1990:131; NY-B 2014, #I-D). On the one hand, there are the puritans who advocate a complete prohibition of music. This was forcibly demonstrated when Islamists controlled northern Mali in 2012 (Davis 2013; Sissako 2015). In general, Islam views singing or musical instruments as inappropriate for worship (SK 2015, 19:40-21:48; IB & BB 2013, 16:54-17:07; Garba 1992:147–8; Rice 2014:5–6). Many Muslims condemn traditional, modern, and Christian forms of music as being un-Islamic and disreputable. Musicians I interviewed stated that it is difficult to make a living off of music today because of the harsh criticism from Muslims (GZ 2013, #V; AB 2013, 18:24-20:01).

On the other hand, Muslims in Africa use music for a variety of purposes. Some use it in Sufi *dhikr* ceremonies (BK2 2013, 33:43-34:12; YM 2016, 31:56-33:03). Others use music to praise and worship Allah outside the mosque and counter the growing attraction of Christian music (MB1 2012, 28:30-28:44; HM4 2016, 10:37-11:31; Elders-A 2014, 15:50-17:03). Qur'anic schools use forms of music in their contexts, and disabled people chant qur'anic formulas to passers-by to receive gifts. Chanted prayers, traditions, or commentaries are all acceptable, although Muslims do not normally classify them as music (Garba 1992:148). As I mentioned in Chapter Three, Section 5.1.1, the destruction of their culture and music by the puritans in Mali horrified many West African Muslims. So, there is debate about the role and use of music in the Islamic Sahel.

Western, 'global' music arrived in Niger on the heels of colonialism. It has had a greater effect on the contemporary music scene than either tradition or Islam. Even though this thesis is concerned with the traditional music-culture, I am looking at it in the contemporary context, and I cannot ignore the new musics, especially popular styles which fuse modern and traditional techniques, instruments, and genres. They are neither Western nor traditional, but a combination of both (HA1 2014, 16:51-18:07). JD made a colourful analogy about changes in music by comparing them to the change in the way people cook eggs:

> Before, when you prepared eggs, how would you do it? You [would] throw them in the fire. They [would] cook. They exploded. That's the traditional manner of eating them. But now, what does modernity say? Yes, you put a little oil in the pan, break [the egg], whip it, and pour it. It makes an omelette, and it's good. But before, it was just in the fire. And it exploded – pffff. Cinders would get into it. But, it wasn't bad. It was good. You ate it. But today, we no longer do that. (2012, 1:21:34-1:22:59)

The contemporary nation-state has also had an effect on the conceptualization of music. The country of Niger has not promoted music and artists the way neighbouring Mali has. It has not taught music in schools. Music does not receive much official recognition. Aside from the national anthem, the creation of the Centre for Musical

Training and Promotion (CFPM), and some music competitions, there is very little encouragement to professional musicians in the country (AZ 2015, 1:28:34-1:29:21; Garba 1992:146–7, 202–204, 208). This hinders musicians and puts music in a disadvantageous position.

3. Musical Occasions/Genres

'Traditional music, I think I can say, is tied to events. We don't do music just for music. There are occasions for music.' (MB1 2012, 17:57-18:07; Stone 2004:15–17) So says one of my Songhai friends. I have divided the occasions, or genres, that I discovered in the Songhai music-culture into five categories: liturgical, *jesere*, festive, hortatory, and other. These categories are my own and constitute a way to organize my data.[1] They are not necessarily the way Songhai people see them. Furthermore, these occasions are not mutually exclusive. A *jesere* will often show up at a festive event to sing praise poems, and there may be liturgical music at a naming ceremony. Almost any occasion can include story-telling or proverbs. Thus, there is an overlap and blending of genres instead of clear lines of distinction.

3.1 Liturgical Music

Musical Vignette: *Thursday, 27 February 2014, 19:00 hours. The music has been playing nearly two hours and nothing has happened. The* zima *sits lazily on his mat, looking bored and detached. The musicians have changed rhythms and melodies several times. The thump and clack of the calabash drum continues its mind-numbing beat. The piercing cry of the one-stringed fiddle is nearly deafening. No one has danced or moved yet. There are not even many people in the courtyard. I wonder if I will see any activity tonight. Slowly people gather for the ceremony. It is getting dark and hard to see. Suddenly a man to my left screams and leaps into the air, throwing himself toward the*

[1] While the categories chosen are my own, they are not completely without support amongst the Songhai. MG classed five genres of traditional music that roughly correspond to my categories: folkloric music, sacred music, music for rejoicing, music of the professional social classes, and music for sport (MG-B 2013, #III-A).

musicians. He leap-frogs toward them, then vaults into the air and slams to the ground on his back several times. After he calms down, several people begin dancing to the music. It is a slow step, in a circle. Finally, the zima *stands and cries out with unrecognizable guttural exclamations* (DeValve 2014a:4).[2]

So began what the Songhai call the *fooley foori*, the spirit ceremony, or 'possession dance'. The *fooley* is a type of 'possession-trance' ceremony, what Fremont Besmer defines as 'an altered state of consciousness which is institutionalized and culturally patterned' (1983:3). It lies at the heart of the Songhai traditional religion, which recognizes families of divinities corresponding to the forces of nature; powerful people (rulers, Muslims, or colonial officials); or feared elements such as sickness, death, and cold (Stoller 1989a:xx–xxii; Surugue 1972:8–13).

The liturgical genre of music is distinct from the others in that it is the only traditional music used for communication with the supernatural (JM & MA 2012, 39:30-49:28; Rouget 1985:148). Both Islam and Christianity harshly condemn the traditional religion and its accompanying music; however, it still has a tenacious hold on many, particularly women (Stoller 1989a:47–9; Besmer 1983:viii; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 5:09-5:54; MN 2012, 41:24-41:37; HM2 2015, 23:28-24:03). It fulfils the functions of validating social norms and of giving vent to emotional and psychological expression.

To conduct a *fooley*, a priest-healer, or *zima*, calls together the possession troupe at irregular intervals, usually during the dry season (October to June), often on a propitious day such as Thursday or Saturday (ZB 2013, 4:29-5:07; MN 2012, 38:23-39:10; Stoller & Olkes 1987:69; AY 2014, 14:40-15:10). The troupe consists of the *zima*, a man or woman who acts as intermediary between the spirits and the petitioners;

[2] I am relying on my personal observations and impressions for this story. The *zima* in charge would not allow me to record the ceremony or take pictures. I was only allowed to observe, take notes, and ask questions.

musicians (a praise-singer and two or more instrumentalists); and the adepts, who will perform dances in honour of the spirits and allow their bodies to be 'taken' by the spirits (Besmer 1983:11–28; Stoller 1989a:33–5, 131; SH 2016, 21:15-21:55; BK1 & GA 2012, 7:45-8:10).

The purpose of the ceremony is to initiate someone with 'spirit sickness' into the cult or to meet an individual need for health, protection, or advice from the divinities (HS1 2013, 4:02-4:25; SK 2015, 25:51-26:34; MN 2012, 5:32-8:34; Besmer 1983:21). At the ceremony I attended, people came looking for advice. The *zima* consulted the spirits and gave an answer to the petitioners. According to Stoller, this is the most common type of possession-trance ceremony (1989a:33; DeValve 2014a, 20h04-20h29 & #IV). Special ceremonies include the *yeenandi*,[3] which invokes the blessing of the spirits on the coming rainy season (June-September) and is usually held in the 'seventh month' of the dry season (May) (ZB 2013, 12:19-13:13; HS1 2013, 0:42-1:17; MH2, SI, & HS2 2015, 19:22-20:47; Rouch 1954a:1671).[4] While I was not able to record a *fooley*, one person recited for me a praise poem which calls on *Dongo*, the spirit of thunder, during a *yeenandi*. The reader may listen to this poem at the following link: http://bit.ly/2jXiFO6 (AY 2014, 44:37-44:48).

Music and dance in the *fooley* are highly stylized and follow set patterns. Both the *zima* and the adepts may dance to the music and become mediums for the spirit represented by the music. The most common instruments used are a one-stringed fiddle and one or more calabashes (hemispherical gourds), beaten with sticks (see section 4.2.1 of this chapter). The musicians play their instruments for hours with very little break

[3] The meaning of the word *yeenandi* is 'to cool off' or 'to make cool'.

[4] Since I am concerned mainly with liturgical music, I have given only the briefest outline of the Songhai traditional religion. I refer the interested reader to others who have written extensively about the traditional religion and the possession-trance ceremonies amongst both the Songhai and neighbouring Hausa (Stoller 1989a; Besmer 1983; Rouch 1996; Surugue 1972; Erlmann 1982; Gibbal 1994; Olivier de Sardan 1992; Masquelier 2001). The monograph *Music and Trance* by Gilbert Rouget (1985) is also good general source about the phenomenon of possession-trance cults.

and may change rhythm, tempo, or tune at any moment. At the same time, a praise-singer invokes the spirits to 'take' their mediums and answer the needs of the petitioners (HS1 2013, 8:25-8:41).

3.2 *Jesere* Music

While liturgical music honours and praises the spirits, *jesere* music honours people, both the living and their ancestors. In general, the two types of music are not associated in people's minds (MB1 2012, 19:18-20:00). Until the twentieth century, liturgical and *jesere* music were probably the most common forms of music heard or played amongst the Songhai. Even today, in traditional settings, the *jesere* still hold a virtual monopoly on certain genres of music (JM & MA 2012, 45:57-46:43; AY 2014, 25:04-25:22; Hale 1998:143).

The most common genre of *jesere* music is praise-poetry or praise-singing (Songhai: *zamu*). It is a verbal art and not necessarily what outsiders might define as music. Rather, it is on the margins between language and music. Praise-singing is found all over Africa, but in the Sahel and parts of the savannah, it has traditionally been the role of the hereditary griots. The genre of praise-singing consists of recounting the deeds of people and their ancestors (Hale 1998:115–17; Eyre 2000:30; MB2 2012, 1:18:07-1:19:50). The powerful words flatter the listeners into giving the singer compensation for his praise. Indeed, it would be shameful not to give when someone has been so honoured in public (Maiga & Maiga 1978:40; Hoffman 1995:37–8). Camara Laye has written an evocative portrayal of the griot's verbal art in his autobiographical memoir, *The Dark Child*. While he is not Songhai, what he describes has many parallels with Songhai praise-singing. The griot in this case was hired by a client to praise Laye's blacksmith father as he created a piece of gold jewellery:

> The praise-singer took a curious part – I should say rather that it was direct and effective – in the work. He was drunk with the joy of creation. He shouted aloud in joy … He sweated as if he were the trinket-maker, as if he were my father, as if the trinket were his creation … He was a man who created his song out of some deep inner necessity. And when my father, after having soldered the large grain of gold that crowned the summit, held out his work to

> be admired, the praise-singer would no longer be able to contain himself. He would begin to intone … the great chant which is sung only for celebrated men and which is danced for them alone. (1954:38–9)

Along with praise-singing come two other genres associated with *jesere* music: the recitation of genealogies and proverbs, and fable- or story-telling. While anyone can tell a story or a genealogy, the *jesere* have a unique worldview which esteems the social status of the listener. Both genres are integral to praise-singing as the *jesere* weaves his tapestry of words. Through rigorous training and memorization, the genealogist often has the ability to go back many generations in a particular family tree and serves as the collective memory and conscience of the Songhai people (AM1 2013, 27:40-29:06; TB-B 2013, 56:01-57:00; AS 2013, 22:59-24:08).

Another genre of *jesere* music is the epic. Similar to story-telling, it is a longer and more detailed narrative about an important person or event in Songhai history. Thomas Hale provides an example of this in his book, *Scribe, Griot, and Novelist*, entitled 'The Epic of Askia Mohammed' (1990:60–66, 178–279). Epics are common in West Africa and tell the stories of different ethnolinguistic groups (Hale 1998:131–43; Johnson et al. 1997:xiii–xxii, 4-223). The epic, as well as story-telling and recitation of genealogies fulfil the functions of communication, teaching, and the validation of cultural norms for the Songhai (Bornand 2004a:61–4).

3.3 Festive Music

Festive music was mentioned by 42 of 56 research participants in the semi-structured interviews. It is the most common music seen and heard in Songhai and Zarma areas today. It fulfils the functions of validating societal norms and giving expression to emotions. It also confirms a sense of community belonging (Kidula 2013:21–31; Corbitt 1998:17). Festive music occurs during rites of passage (namings and weddings), at Muslim festivals such as *Eid-al-Adha* and *Eid-al-Fitr*, at the crowning of a new chief,

and during the yearly agricultural cycle, especially after the harvest (BK1 & GA 2012, 8:46-8:55; MB2 2012, 43:37-45:04; SK 2015, 10:30-12:11).

The most common type of festive music occurs at weddings and namings. These ceremonies may last several days and include the use of a variety of instruments, song, and dance. For example, one song exhorts a bride not to cry (PA in Elders-A 2014, 21:52-24:54; JD 2012, 6:12-6:43). Women may organize a dance before a marriage ceremony. Young people will dance in the streets during the wedding to the beat of various traditional instruments or modern Afro-pop music blasted over loud-speakers. The *jesere* may be summoned or may simply appear to sing the praises of the families involved. The hourglass drum players (see Section 4.2.2) show up to strike their instruments, thereby announcing the event to the community and seeking handouts (Waridel 1994:4; Karimou 1972:99). In Mali, one type of festive music performed at weddings and namings is *takamba*, a genre that came out of the Songhai Empire and is performed today by both Songhai and Tuareg people (Eyre 2000:204; Trouillet 2016; MS4 2015, 6:49-8:15).

Other types of festive music are less common but no less important. Music connected to Muslim festivals includes much drumming but little dancing. The crowning of a new chief includes a variety of traditional and *tradi-moderne* musical troupes with much singing, drumming, and dancing. Harvest dances are organized by young people during the cool season (November-February) after the heavy field labour is completed. They are held at night, generally in years of abundance. In the non-growing season, young ladies and women may also organize social dances at night.

3.4 Hortatory Music

Another genre of music involves exhorting people to acts of bravery, courage, and perseverance. This kind of music serves to validate cultural norms, but it can also serve as an emotional release valve. In the past, it was used to encourage warriors to exhibit

valour and fortitude in the face of an enemy (Gramont 1991:263; MS4 2015, 42:58-43:13). Today, it may be used to inspire people to persevere in a task or to participate in community projects. For instance, a man may ask his friends and family members to help work his fields or repair his house. If he has enough means, he may hire some musicians to sing for them. These musicians generally come from the *jesere* class. They praise the workers and inspire them to persevere under the hot sun (MB2 2012, 42:42-44:11; AY 2014, 49:15-50:01; AZ 2015, 47:41-48:22).

A variation of this genre of music is used to encourage wrestlers. Traditional wrestling has become a popular sport in Niger and across the Sahel since Independence. During wrestling competitions, the wrestler may be serenaded by musicians from the *jesere* class. Each wrestler will have his own rhythm and may even shout his own praise poem to the crowd assembled (Sériba 2005).

Three other types of encouragement music occur during the opening of fishing season, at political rallies, and in ceremonies which encourage women to fatten up. The first is an annual event in many towns and villages along the Niger River and its tributaries. It occurs after the rainy season when the water starts drying up. The whole town turns out to watch or participate in the festive event, and the *jesere* (especially hourglass drum players) attend to encourage the fishermen and provide entertainment (JD 2012, 27:54-28:38). At political rallies, professional musicians may show up or attach themselves to particular candidates or public officials to sing their praises and encourage others to join them. The 'fattening'[5] is an occasional event unique to the Songhai/Zarma. It occurs only after a good harvest. For a specified time (two-three months), the women of a town gorge themselves on special foods at weekly shared meals. At the end of the period, a special dance is held for all the participants, and the most beautiful (fattest) woman receives a prize of the best food, usually the fat portions

[5] *Haŋandi* (literally 'watering') in Songhai.

of the meat prepared (MG-B 2013, #III-B-4; HB 2015, 10:52-12:36; MB2 2012, 1:00:11-1:00:35). Music is played to encourage the women in their fat-building contest.

3.5 Other Music

A great variety of miscellaneous musical occasions/genres occur in Songhai culture. One of the most common is the announcer, akin to the role of the old town crier in European cultures. A *jesere* will circulate through a town or village bearing a message. He beats a stylized rhythm on an hourglass drum and shouts an announcement (BK1 & GA 2012, 25:20-25:38). I witnessed this many times in Téra. It became so familiar that when I heard the drum, I would automatically cock my ears to capture the message.

Other musical genres are largely confined to women. The first occurs when they pound grain in large mortars. They may start up a rhythm with their pestles, throw them up in the air, clap, and sing to the beat. Their songs are often complaints about co-wives or encouragements to each other to keep pounding. One song in this genre is the *Yeeti Yeeta*, which I mentioned in Chapter Three, Section 3.1.4. The reader may hear my lute teacher playing an excerpt of this musical piece at the following link: http://bit.ly/2lQczkV. The second occasion is when young ladies sing love songs together (TB-B 2013, 43:52-44:58). In addition to these two genres, there is the music of children (especially games that young girls play) 'lullabies'[6] that mothers sing to their babies, and stories and songs that parents and grandparents tell their children around a fire at night (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 12:47-13:22; AY 2014, 54:50-55:10; MB2 2012, 41:26-42:02; Bisillat & Laya 1972).

Another occasion for music occurs when contemporary artists combine traditional and modern elements. They fuse pop music with traditional elements such as musical instruments, modes of playing and singing, pentatonic scales, and the Songhai language. This is performed in a concert hall or on television and recorded for a mass audience

[6] *Zamu* ('praises') in Songhai.

(DH & MH1 2014, 13:55-14:16; HA1 2014, 16:50-18:07). It is referred to as *tradi-moderne* (traditional-modern) music in French.

Finally, there is the music shepherds play as they tend their flocks (usually a type of reed flute) (BK2 2013, 28:26-29:14) and the *dhikr* music of the Muslim Sufi sects (MB2 2012, 1:05:37-1:05:59; MK 2014, 19:27-20:05). One may also hear and see music performed by military bands on national holidays or strummed by young people on the single-stringed plucked lute when they get together to chat.

4. Musical Instruments

4.1 Introduction

Musical instruments are defining elements of a music-culture. They are artefacts that display the possibilities and the actualizations of the surrounding society (Crouch 2008:29–32). While the Songhai do not have a specific word for 'musical instrument', they may use the terms *goy jiney* ('work things' or 'tools') or *foori jiney* ('things for amusement') to refer to them. Unless one understands the context of the conversation, however, these words can be confused with other cultural artefacts (Women 2013, #I-D-4; IH 2014, 15:57-16:12; MK 2014, 2:02-2:20; AS 2013, 14:08-14:56).

Europeans and North Americans have spilled large amounts of sweat and ink over instrument classification systems that are largely lost on most Songhai. I will deal with classification in the section on musicians. In this section, I will introduce Songhai instruments under two headings: specialized instruments (those restricted to a particular purpose or class of people) and non-specialized instruments (those not restricted at all or restricted only by gender) (AM1 2013, 19:31-20:31; DA 2014, #XVIII; BK2 2013, 25:21-27:18). There is an impressive collection of instruments that Songhai/Zarma people recognize as their own. I have identified seven instruments in the specialized category and six in the non-specialized category. Four of the specialized instruments were mentioned by research participants more than forty times each without my

prompting (TB-A 2013, #I; IH 2014, 0:30-0:56; AM2 & AO 2014, 1:39-6:06). I will deal with them first and spend more time describing them than the others.

The following link will connect the reader to a folder with sound files for seven of these instruments: http://bit.ly/2jU8aZn. Once in the folder, one can select the appropriate file to listen to the instrument in question. The names of the instruments which have sound files attached are underlined in the photo caption.

4.2 Specialized Instruments

4.2.1 Instruments Used in Liturgical Ceremonies

Gaasu 1

The word *gaasu* is a generic term to describe a bowl-shaped calabash (a hemispherical gourd). It usually means a bowl or container, but it may also refer to a musical instrument. When it does, it is most often associated with the Songhai traditional religion (GI 2012, 7:17-8:04; HA1 2014, 9:33-10:03; HS1 2013, 1:25-1:35). The *gaasu* used in liturgical ceremonies is a large calabash turned upside down and placed over a hole dug in the ground to create resonance. The musician sits behind the instrument and strikes it with sticks bound together to resemble fingers (see photo 5-1). The strike and roll playing technique differentiates it from other instruments and

Photo 5-1: *Gaasu 1*

Credit : Nancy DeValve

Courtesy: *Centre de Formation et de Promotion Musicale* (CFPM), Niamey, NIGER

produces a distinctive 'thump and clack' sound (GI 2012, 8:08-8:58; ZB 2013, 1:39-2:42; DeValve 2014a, 17h07-17h16; 18h38; Stoller 1984:564–5).

Any man with the talent and the consecration to the spirit cult may play the *gaasu*. Women do not normally play it. At the *fooley*, there are usually two to five *gaasu* players. The *fooley* I observed, however, had only one, and he doubled as the praise-singer, calling on the spirits to make their appearance. The *gaasu* is not the dominating instrument in the *fooley*. It is a rhythm instrument used to accompany the *gooje* and cannot invoke the spirits without it (HS1 2013, 7:09-7:45; ZB 2013, 2:42-3:33; Surugue 1972:49–59).

Gooje

The *gooje* was probably borrowed from North Africa around the time of the Moroccan conquest and has been in continuous use by the Songhai since then (Cissoko 2000:219; Rouch 1996:152–3; Hause 1948:20). A *zima* I interviewed said, 'the *gooje* and the *gaasu* walk together' (ZB 2013, 13:49). They are inseparable in the minds of many (Men of DA 2013, 1:36-1:47; IB & BB 2013, 2:30-2:46). Played almost exclusively by men, the *gooje* is the master of the *fooley* ceremony and the instrument which, more than any other, is associated with the spirit world and

Photo 5-2: *Gooje*

Credit: Nancy DeValve

Courtesy: CFPM, Niamey, NIGER

possession-trance (AB 2013, 17:25-18:21; HS1 2013, 14:19-14:39; Garba 1992:167; Rouget 1985:76).

The *gooje* is a monochord violin played with a bow (see photo 5-2). The resonating cavity is made from a small calabash covered with the skin of a monitor lizard. The skin has a sound hole in it. The neck is a stick which attaches to the resonating cavity and passes through it. There are no frets, but the *gooje* player moves his fingers up and down the neck and presses the string while rubbing the bow against the string. The single string of the *gooje* is made of strands of hair from a horse's tail. The bow is a bent stick with strands of horsehair attached (ZB 2013, 1:39-2:42; BK3 2014, #I-B; Rouch 1996:150–51; Surugue 1972:27–40).

The sound of the *gooje* is loud and unmistakable. The Songhai often refer to it as a 'cry' or 'wail' (Stoller 1984:564).[7] It creates a powerful effect on the hearer. One participant in this research said she gets the shivers whenever she hears the *gooje* (MS1 in DA 2014, #VI-C). The instrument must be consecrated in a special ceremony before its use. This ceremony involves a blood sacrifice (Stoller 1989a:113). Both the *gooje* and the *gaasu* were mentioned independently by forty-two different research participants when prompted to name Songhai traditional instruments.

4.2.2 Instruments Used by the *Jesere*

Dondon

This instrument is a double-headed hourglass drum found throughout West Africa in various shapes and sizes. Sometimes known as a pressure drum, it was mentioned by fifty different participants. Cords running along the sides of the drum connect the two heads together and hold them in tension (see photo 5-3). The drummer places the *dondon* under his left arm and beats it with a small curved stick or with his left hand. He

[7] The Songhai word is *hẽ*.

can vary the tone and timbre of the drum by squeezing the strings at the narrow part of the instrument (Charry 2000b:233–4; Ames & King 1971:23–6; BK3 2014, # I-E & #I-F).

Photo 5-3: *Dondon*

Credit: Nancy DeValve
Courtesy: *CFPM, Niamey, NIGER*

While the majority of my research participants referred to this drum as a *dondon*, some called it a *hárέy* (Youth 2013, #II-C; AY 2014, 21:34-21:54). The latter is a general term for rhythm, and, by extension, an instrument which creates rhythm. Three participants insisted that *hárέy* means only 'rhythm', as in the Songhai proverb, 'When the beat (*hárέy*) changes, the dance also changes.' (TB-B 2013, 8:24-9:17; HM4 2016, 34:30-35:32) Other participants, however, clearly used the word *hárέy* to refer to a drum, and the Zarma-French dictionary supports this meaning (AH 2015, 9:10-9:26; Men of DA 2013, 5:03-5:22; HA2 2016, 27:39-28:06; Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:146). Another participant stated it could be used as a synonym for any type of musical instrument with a skin (HK 2013, 22:34-26:29). Some distinguished the *hárέy* (a larger drum) from the *dondon* (MB2 2012, 26:55-27:13). Evidently, the word has a range of meanings for different people.

Photo 5-4: *Dondon* player

Credit: Nancy DeValve

The *dondon* has a variety of uses. It is often

seen and heard during celebrations (namings, weddings, and festivals). A *jesere* will play the *dondon* on these occasions and ask for handouts. It is also used to announce messages or call people to meetings (HG 2014, 20:43-21:14; AM1 2013, 3:25-3:48; GI 2012, 2:19-3:25). Another use of the *dondon* is to encourage workers building, farming together, or doing community service projects (HK 2013, 27:42-29:03; TB-B 2013, 42:08-43:12). Finally, the *dondon* may be used in liturgical ceremonies, especially during the *yeenandi* (HK 2013, 1:22-1:57).

Dondon players (see photo 5-4) are exclusively male (Garba 1992:165; GI 2012, 15:23-15:37). The trade is passed from one generation to another within families. Many Songhai and Zarma despise the *dondonkarey* (*dondon* players) and refer to them as 'slaves' (that is, descendants of former slaves) or part of the artisan 'caste' (*jesere*). It is considered shameful for anyone not an artisan to lower himself to play the *dondon* (MB2 2012, 22:03-22:39; BK1 & GA 2012, 4:55-5:02). A typical conversation I had with a Songhai about the *dondonkarey* went like this:

> John: Who … plays [the *dondon*]?
> AS: It's the slaves who play it.
> John: The slaves?
> AS: Mmm.
> John: Can women play it?
> AS: Well, in reality, in our region, women don't play the *dondon*. (2013, 5:22-5:36)

The hourglass drum is used as a talking drum in some nearby cultures. In the Songhai culture, the *dondonkarey* may use the drum to talk to each other, but most Songhai are unaware of the speech patterns (AZ 2015, 1:01:26-1:03:45). Still, a Songhai proverb says, 'A drum is no good unless the messenger comes out of it.' Simply put, 'A message is no good unless it is understood.' (JD 2012, 14:13-15:27)

Moolo

The *moolo* (*kubur* in Mali) is the instrument par excellence of the West African Sahel and the one most closely identified with the *jesere*. It was mentioned forty-nine times by my research participants. It is a type of plucked lute with two or three strings and resembles the Mande *ngoni* (photo 5-5). Eric Charry claims that plucked lutes are some of the oldest melody instruments in West Africa, dating back several centuries before the explorer Ibn Battuta mentioned them in the fourteenth century (2000b:122–8; NY-A 2014, #I-D; Maiga & Maiga 1978:37).

Photo 5-5: *Moolo*

Credit: Nancy DeValve

Unlike the *gooje*, the *moolo* is plucked with the fingers of the right hand. The strings are made of horse hair or plastic. For the three-stringed version, the top string is shorter than the others and is a drone. It is plucked with the thumb. The two other strings are plucked with the index and middle fingers and the thumb (photo 5-6). The long wooden neck has no frets, but the musician moves his left fingers up and down the neck and presses the free strings while plucking them with the right fingers. The resonator of the *moolo* is made of a carved wooden trough covered with a sheep or goat skin. The neck is made of a stick and extends through the top of the instrument, protruding into a sound hole cut in the skin. At the top of the neck is a metal rattle called a *sansari* (BK3 2014, #I-C; CFPM 2014, #II-F; IH 2014, 13:39-14:07).

Photo 5-6: Playing the *Moolo*

Credit: Nancy DeValve

Above all, the *moolo* is used to accompany the epics, genealogies, and praise poetry addressed to nobles, warriors, the rich, and any freeborn person (HK 2013, 12:04-12:33; AB 2013, 28:00-28:45). The *moolo* player, usually but not exclusively male, accompanies the praise-singer who is telling the story and reciting the genealogies. He is considered of higher social status than the *dondon* player but still a member of the 'inferior' musician class (AS 2013, 12:51-13:36; EK-A 2013, 8:43-9:23; IB & BB 2013, 7:03-7:13).

Of the four specialized instruments I have mentioned, the *moolo* seems to be disappearing the most quickly. In my thirty-three years in Niger, I have rarely seen it played. It is a quiet instrument intended for small groups and not well adapted to the stage (JD 2012, 13:11-13:39); however, I have seen modified forms of the instrument used by *tradi-moderne* or, occasionally, church musicians (Charry 2000b:298). It can also be heard and seen on radio or television played by modern *jesere* who adapt it to fit those formats. The *moolo* is also the instrument I chose to learn to play.

4.2.3 Other Specialized Instruments

Tuubal

The *tuubal* is a large, round, hemispheric drum covered with a skin (IB & BB 2013, 8:09-8:22; AB 2013, 41:57-42:27). It is associated exclusively with the traditional chiefs, whose power and authority are invested in it (Maiga 2010:78). The resonating cavity is made of wood carved in the shape of a bowl. The instrument is very large and has a deep, booming sound that can carry several kilometres (see photo 5-7). One

participant stated that the sound of the instrument is not considered music but is used like a talking drum for announcements only (HA2 2016, 26:59-27:09).

Photo 5-7: *Tuubal*

Credit: Nancy DeValve
Courtesy: CFPM, Niamey, NIGER

'The *tuubal* does not cry for any reason.' (Songhai Proverb) (HM4 2016, 20:42-21:12) This instrument is played only by men connected to the chief and only on special occasions. In the past, the chief's drummers would beat an enormous version of this drum to summon able-bodied warriors from the surrounding towns for battle (AM2 & AO 2014, 15:23-15:45; GS 2012, 16:47-17:31; Rouch 1996:159). Today, one hears the drum most often to announce the death of a paramount chief. This is the only instance when a musical instrument is played at a Songhai/Zarma funeral. Other occasions where one may hear the *tuubal* are at the enthronement of a new chief or to announce his visit on a feast day (DA 2014, #V-J; Men of DA 2013, 9:17-9:45; AZ 2015, 16:16-16:58). While the instrument had a major role to play in many local chieftaincies in the past, today it is associated primarily with the paramount Zarma chief of Dosso (JD 2012, 23:53-24:21; IH 2014, 2:58-3:24).

Seese

The only aerophone amongst the traditional Songhai instruments, the *seese* is one name for a class of instruments resembling the flute (see photo 5-8). It goes by various names depending on the material the flute is made of, the size of the instrument, and the dialect of the person speaking: *seerul, dulliara, laati,* and *bullu* (SS 2012, #I-E; SB & MS3

2014, 3:55-4:14; BK3 2014, #I-N; HM2 2015, 14:56-15:09). The *seese* is made of reeds, stalks of grain, wood, or occasionally, metal. Four small sound holes are cut in the body of the flute, and the player blows into one end of the flute, stopping the holes with his fingers to create various sounds.

Photo 5-8: *Seese*

Credit: John DeValve
Courtesy: *YM*

While this instrument is not restricted by class, it is commonly associated with male shepherds, who often come from the Fulani ethnolinguistic group (Men of DA 2013, 8:54-9:17). The young shepherds will cut a stalk of grain when in the countryside and make it into a flute to while away the time in the solitary wilderness. Because the stalk is fragile, the flute disintegrates quickly. During the rainy season, boys of any background may make flutes from stalks of grain or reeds for amusement. Some flutes made of local materials are played during festivals (TB-B 2013, 38:55-39:21; EK-A 2013, 9:36-10:22; BK2 2013, 28:26-29:14). More durable flutes made of bamboo, wood, PVC pipe, or metal are played by *tradi-moderne* and Afro-pop musicians.

Bum-bum

Another type of *gaasu*, the *bum-bum* is a small calabash upturned in a larger container or calabash filled with water (see photo 5-9). The name is an onomatopoeia for the sound of the instrument. Struck with flip-flops, the hands, or a cloth-covered stick, the floating calabash makes the sound of a hollow, rhythmic 'boom' (SS 2012, #I-B; AB 2013, 14:25-15:18; AS 2013, 6:00-6:25). This is the only traditional Songhai instrument played solely by and for women. One hears it almost exclusively during wedding

celebrations. While preparing for a wedding, women in a village or neighbourhood may meet together for singing and dancing accompanied by the *bum-bum* (HB 2015, 2:52-3:30; BK2 2013, 12:48-13:06; MK 2014, 2:44-3:26).

Photo 5-9: *Bum-bum*

Credit: Nancy DeValve
Courtesy: *CFPM, Niamey, NIGER*

This instrument is played by the Songhai and not the Zarma. A Songhai man first introduced me to the name *bum-bum* (SS 2012, #I-B). In subsequent interviews with Zarma people, I encountered an ignorance of the term. They stated that Zarma women do not play the instrument. Rather, Tuareg and Fulani women play it (TB-B 2013, 16:29-16:54; HK 2013, 21:04-21:42; MB2 2012, 17:25-17:57). Even in the Museum of Traditional Musical Instruments, the *bum-bum* is classed with these ethnolinguistic groups (CFPM 2014, #I-A-4). When I talked to Songhai people, however, the story was different. Most Songhai easily named the instrument without my prompting and said their women play it.[8] One conversation went like this:

> John: Do the Songhai women play the *bum-bum*?
> JD: Yes.
> John: Because I talked to another Zarma person who told me that women don't play the *bum-bum* amongst the Zarma.
> JD: Women, amongst the Songhai, the women play it very well and will continue to do so.
> John: OK, because she said it was the Fulani or the …
> JD: Tuareg.
> John: …Tuareg that play the *bum-bum*, but not the Son…[9] not the Zarma.
> JD: The Songhai play it. (2012, 8:17-8:38)

[8] Thomas Hale also mentioned the *bum-bum* in my phone conversation with him (2010, #IV)
[9] I started to say the word 'Songhai' here but corrected myself.

4.3 Non-Specialized Instruments

4.3.1 Instruments that Existed before the Twentieth Century

Gaasu 2

Photo 5-10: *Gaasu 2* Players at the Crowning of a New Chief: Téra, NIGER, January 2008

Credit: Nancy DeValve

The same calabash used in liturgical ceremonies can also be played for celebrations. In this case, the *gaasu* player, usually a man, wears rings on his fingers and strikes the instrument with his hands, making a sharp clacking sound. When played like this, the instrument is not particularly associated with any spiritual or occult power. The *gaasu 2* is played at all types of celebrations, especially weddings. It may also be used at the ceremony for the crowning of a new chief (see photo 5-10) and in concerts of Afro-pop musicians (DH & MH1 2014, 21:17-21:45; IH 2014, 10:19-10:48).

Photo 5-11: *Bitti*

Credit: Nancy DeValve
Courtesy: CFPM, Niamey, NIGER

Bitti

The *bitti*, or *kunce hárέy*, is a double-headed drum which is similar to but bigger than a *dondon* and has a cylindrical shape. It is slung in front of the player and played with both hands (see photo 5-11). The drum is used almost exclusively in the Zarmaganda, the

heartland of the Zarma people in Niger between Dosso and Ouallam (GS 2012, 24:03-25:14; IB & BB 2013, 4:51-5:05; EK-A 2013, 3:08-3:24). The term *kunce hárέy* comes from the name of the former president of Niger, Seyni Kountché (1974-87), whose home is in the Zarmaganda (BK3 2014, #I-I; MS4 2015, 13:25-14:00). *Bitti* seems to be the more commonly used name for the instrument today (AB 2013, 39:43-40:25).

Like the *dondon*, the *bitti* is played by men at all kinds of events like harvest festivals, wrestling matches, and weddings (AH 2015, 16:08-16:43; MS2 2013, 00:53-2:18). It often accompanies a special dance called the *bitti hárέy* (CFPM 2014, #II-H); however, because of its size, the way it is played, and the fact that one cannot adjust the tension on the heads, its sound is distinct from the *dondon*.

Kasa-kasa

Amongst the Songhai there is a class of rattles used to accompany many music occasions. Research participants referred to all of them by the global term *kasa-kasa*, reflecting the sound of the instrument, but they go by various names depending on the materials the instrument is made of or the region it comes from (JD 2012, 19:30-21:09; TB-B 2013, 10:48-11:25; Elders 2015, 19:10-19:55; MK 2014, 4:46-5:14). They all have seeds, small stones, or beads inside or attached to the exterior of the instrument. These make a rattling noise when shaken or struck. There are three main types of *kasa-kasa*. The first type is a long, hollowed-out reed or gourd shaped like a cucumber and usually played by women at wedding ceremonies (sometimes called a *tisigi* or *suntaŋ*) (MH2, SI, & HS2 2015, 12:46-13:33;

Photo 5-12: *Kasa-kasa* (*Zollo*)

Credit: Nancy DeValve

Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:272, 290; HA1 2014, 00:35-1:19). The second is a gourd (*zollo*) shaped somewhat like an hourglass with the top half smaller in diameter than the bottom. The *zollo* is sometimes used at *fooley* ceremonies, but a form of the instrument with beads attached is commonly used in church services (see photo 5-12) (Mayet 2005, Scene 9). Some called this instrument a *seeka-seeka* (GI 2012, 14:05-14:36; MS4 2015, 28:42-32:17). The third is an adaptation to the contemporary world. It consists of a small metal can (often a Nescafé tin) filled with small stones or seeds (IB & BB 2013, 5:44-6:24). The Museum of Traditional Instruments in Niamey has this one on display and labels it a *konka* ('tin can') (CFPM 2014, #II-J). The latter two forms of the instrument are not restricted by gender or class and are used on all occasions of celebration or to accompany stories and proverbs (MB2 2012, 28:25-28:33; Men of DA 2013, 8:03-8:19; GS 2012, 29:23-30:06).

4.3.2 Instruments Appearing in the Twentieth Century

Gumbe 1

Photo 5-13: *Gumbe 1*

Credit: Nancy DeValve

There are two drums that are often called *gumbe*. In their current form, they must have appeared in the twentieth century because some materials of which they are made did not exist before that time. The first *gumbe* consists of a cow skin stretched over a rectangular frame of planed lumber (see photo 5-13). I saw the instrument used in one church, but it is also displayed in the Museum of Traditional Instruments. The museum dates its appearance in Niger to the 1960s. The inscription underneath the *gumbe* says it is not typically Nigerien but was borrowed from neighbouring Benin

(CFPM 2014, #II-B). Three research participants also mentioned it (JD 2012, 49:39-49:56; HG 2014, 9:54-10:31; HK 2013, 6:56-7:39). The *gumbe* player, who is almost always male, places the instrument on the ground, normally with a shorter side down. He then sits on the instrument and uses his right foot to dampen the skin while he strikes it with both hands. The *gumbe* is used at times of celebration, especially when young people get together to dance or talk in the evening.

Gumbe 2

The larger of the two *gumbes*, this instrument is made from an oil drum (barrel) with a cow skin stretched over the top (see photo 5-14). A hole is cut in the side of the barrel to create a loud, booming sound (IH 2014, 34:33-34:40; BK3 2014, #I-L; Mayet 2005, Scene 5). The player stands in front of the instrument and bangs vigorously on the skin with both hands. Several players may follow each other in succession on the instrument as it is physically demanding to play and takes a lot of skill. Some Zarma call it a *zigida* (Men of DA 2013, 5:44-6:17; HG 2014, 10:33-11:14; CFPM 2014, #II-A).

Photo 5-14: *Gumbe* 2

Credit: Nancy DeValve
Courtesy: *CFPM, Niamey, NIGER*

The instrument is played by young men but is not restricted by class or socio-economic position. Young people will get together to dance in a slow circle to the beat of the drum. The *gumbe* may also be used at festivals and political rallies or after the harvest (HA2 2016, 34:16-35:02; AM2 & AO 2014, 7:08-8:02; MN 2012, 20:08-20:37). I witnessed this instrument being used for weddings when I lived in Téra. In the past, however, it was used mainly for social dances amongst young people at night (HK 2013, 5:27-6:54). Two participants added that the *gumbe* players may shout obscenities at people while tapping the instrument. For this reason, Seyni Kountché banned the

instrument when he was president of Niger (AM1 2013, 7:11-7:55; HK 2013, 30:38-32:25).

Kuntiji

Photo 5-15: *Kuntiji*

Credit: John DeValve

The *kuntiji* is a one-stringed plucked lute which is much smaller than either the *moolo* or the *gooje*. The resonating cavity is commonly made from a sardine tin covered with skin, and the arm of the instrument is usually a stick. A *sansari* is often attached to the end of the stick. When I visited the town of Damana in December 2013, one man fabricated a *kuntiji* as I watched, then proceeded to play it (Men of DA 2013, 19:46-25:30) (see photo 5-15). While the Museum of Traditional Instruments states that it originated in Hausa areas, it is used by Songhai people (CFPM 2014, #II-E). Mainly played by young men of any social class, it is often seen at celebrations and can be used to invoke the spirits. It may also be played to attract young ladies or while chatting with friends (GI 2012, 12:55-13:21; MG-A 2013, #I-V; BK3 2014, #I-A).

At various points in the research, I found that people did not distinguish between the three lutes, often recognizing a difference between only two of them. Some participants in this research used the term *moolo* to designate both the two- or three-stringed plucked lute and the bowed lute (*gooje*) (MB1 2012, 25:16-26:38; JD 2012, 9:16-12:11; AM1 2013, 2:27-3:09; 5:25-7:00). On the other hand, some people used the terms *kuntiji* and *moolo* interchangeably (Men of DA 2013, 0:07-0:32; AH 2015, 9:38-11:00; HS1 2013, 6:54-7:04). One participant identified the *gooje* with the *kuntiji*

because of their common use in the *fooley* (GI 2012, 13:29-13:56). Another Songhai man I interviewed called a friend to verify what the *kuntiji* was (BK2 2013, 16:15-20:44). Other participants I interviewed were surprised that native Zarma and Songhai did not distinguish between these instruments (MG-A 2013, #III; AB 2013, 28:45-30:32; AS 2013, 2:19-2:46). I believe there are two explanations for this. First, not all the instruments mentioned here are equally well-represented throughout the Songhai/Zarma region. Second, non-musicians do not always know the instruments of their own culture (GS 2012, 15:00-15:58; HA1 2014, 2:26-2:47). I encountered a similar phenomenon when I saw a clarinet in a home in the United Kingdom. When I asked who in the family played it, one of the daughters responded by saying that many people did not identify it correctly. They often called it a flute, a recorder, or even a saxophone (DV 2014; Chapman 1994:30)!

5. Musicians

5.1 Classification of Musicians and Their Instruments

I have left the question of classification until now because there is compelling evidence to suggest that the Songhai identify musical instruments with people and performance. In short, they classify musicians and how and when they play their instruments. They do not generally classify instruments. When I first visited the Museum of Traditional Instruments in October 2011, I was disappointed to discover that the instruments in the extensive collection were classed using the Hornbostel/Sachs taxonomical system (1961; Kartomi 1990:168–70). Surely there must be some indigenous classification system, I thought. Over the course of my research, I have come to the conclusion that I was looking at the question the wrong way. I was looking at the artefact, while many Songhai tend to look more at the performer/performance (Ames & King 1971:ix). What is important to them is not necessarily the musical instrument, but the musician playing

it and the setting in which he plays it. The evidence for this comes both from secondary and primary sources.

Ruth Stone, writing from the context of Liberia, states that musical instruments in West Africa tend to take on quasi-human features and associations (2004:19). Margaret Kartomi confirms that it is characteristic of West Africans to see instruments as an extension of the persons playing them. For example, she cites Ames and King and the case of the Hausa, who distinguish five categories of musicians: the 'strikers' (those who play membranophones, idiophones, and chordophones), the 'blowers' (those who play aerophones), and three categories of singers (Kartomi 1990:241–52; Ames & King 1971:61, 68–97). The two instrument categories correspond exactly to the classification system of the Kpelle people of Liberia (Stone 2004:19). What is more, the Hausa are neighbours of the Songhai, and each culture has had a profound influence on the other.

Primary sources reveal a similar pattern. When I asked a question about musical instruments, seven participants referred to the musicians who played them (AM1 2013, 2:31-3:09; MS4 2015, 4:19-5:35; HS1 2013, 4:39-5:02; YM 2016, 43:06-43:59; SB & MS3 2014, 1:42-2:08; AH 2015, 36:00-36:10; MD1 2014, 9:07-9:54). MD1 further stated that a musical instrument 'speaks' to people (2014, 57:19-57:56). When I asked one man about a word for musicians, he started listing them by the instrument they played (IH 2014, 24:30-25:18). On another occasion, I asked a musician if he knew a Songhai word for music. He responded by giving me two words, *dooniko* and *háréykari*. The first is composed of two phonemes: *dooni-* ('song') and *–ko* ('the person of') and means 'singer'. The second also has two phonemes: *hárév-* ('a beaten instrument') and *–kari* ('the person who beats'), meaning 'the person who beats the instrument' or 'the drummer' (AB 2013, 42:56-43:41; MD1 2014, 9:07-9:54; AH 2015, 36:00-36:10). His concept of music, it seems, relates, first of all, to performers. AM1 added that musical instruments are not well conceptualized amongst the Songhai/Zarma

(2013, 15:21-15:45). Perhaps the most convincing evidence comes from Mahaman Garba (1954-2009), the first Nigerien ethnomusicologist, who writes,

> A musical instrument has a well-defined social function. It has a strong personality. It is attached to a rite or a dance and dies with them. One makes it drink, venerates it, adores it. With its owner, it achieves such a unity that the arrangement of its vibrating parts changes if that person is left-handed or right-handed. (n.d., painted on the wall of the Museum of Traditional Instruments, Niamey, Niger; Garba 1992:160–61) (my translation)

While a concept of musical instruments seems to be strongly linked to the musician who plays the instrument, the Songhai/Zarma do not have many categories for musicians. Only one instrument in the traditional music-culture, the *seese*, would be classified under Hornbostel/Sachs as an aerophone, what the Hausa would classify under 'blowers'. This instrument is strongly identified with the Fulani ethnolinguistic community, and my participants have consistently used the word *kar* ('to strike') when referring to its performance (GV 2016, 53:42-54:06; Men of DA 2013, 8:19-8:54; EK-A 2013, 9:36-10:22; Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:179). Since the word *kar* is the term for playing any musical instrument – whether it is struck, bowed, plucked, shaken, or blown – it does not seem that the Songhai put it in a separate category. As for categories of singers, I have not discovered any differences beyond slight distinctions in function. It seems, therefore, that the Songhai have two categories for musicians: those who strike ('instrumentalists') and those who sing ('singers') (DjeDje 2000:172).

5.2 *Fooley* Musicians

Far more important to many Songhai/Zarma are the occasions at which musicians perform. The *fooley* is one of those occasions. Most participants in this research agreed that *fooley* musicians are not restricted to a class of people, and they may or may not inherit the role (MN 2012, 10:56-11:11; HS1 2013, 8:57-9:17; ZB 2013, 0:07-1:15). Anyone with the talent may play the *gaasu* or the *gooje* or sing the praises of the spirits. Unlike many roles in traditional Songhai society, it is acquired rather than ascribed, and one may undergo training to play or sing in the *fooley* (MG-A 2013, #I-A; Besmer 1983:11–12). The only exception to this rule is the *sorko*, someone who comes from a

riverine village and calls on the thunder god *Dongo*. That position is always hereditary (Stoller 1989a:92–7; SH 2016, 20:40-20:56; Bornand 2001:335). While most liturgical musicians in Songhai/Zarma areas are men, some are women (EK-A 2013, 5:06-6:25; JD 2012, 32:44-33:04). I have placed these musicians in a separate category for two reasons. First, they are despised and rejected by both Christians and Muslims and even other musicians and are often viewed as deviants (Masquelier 2001:102; Besmer 1983:12, 18–19; BK2 2013, 31:33-34:12). Second, they play a specialized form of music and dedicate their lives to the traditional religion.

5.3 Jesere

The *jesere* were and continue to be the undisputed masters of the word, as I reported in Chapter Two. There I described their status and past role and dealt with the term griot. In this section, I will deal with several other terms used to designate the *jesere* and then elaborate on their current role and reputation.

5.3.1 Terms

One word often used to designate the *jesere* is *nyamakala*. Of Mande origin, this word describes any artisan who possesses *nyama*, 'the notion of the highly-dangerous vitalizing force of the world that can be packaged and made even more potent by acts of transformation' (McIntosh 1998:26; Charry 2000b:48–54; Tamari 1991:243). Even though the term is used for any artisan in Mande regions, many Songhai/Zarma use it as a synonym for the *jesere* (AS 2013, 22:08-22:13; YM 2016, 34:43-34:58). When I asked AM1 if there was a difference between the *jesere* and the *nyamakala*, he said, 'No, no, it goes back to the same reality.' (2013, 22:12-22:18) Others draw distinctions between the two. Sandra Bornand uses *nyamakala* for the genealogists/historians who have inherited the profession and distinguishes them from the modern *jesere* who are not from the musician class and do not know the genealogies or stories of the past (2002:284; Karimou 1972:98). Many of my research participants use the term in a

similar fashion. For them, the *nyamakala* is the praise-singer, the keeper of the traditions, the one who uses his voice to earn a living. He does not necessarily play an instrument and does not blatantly ask for things (IB & BB 2013, 14:06-14:31; MB1 2012, 51:14-51:41; GS 2012, 11:33-12:03). While some say he comes from the former slave class, others dispute this claim (DA 2014, #XV-B-2; MN 2012, 17:11-18:03; GZ 2013, #II). In any case, he often has a higher status than other *jesere* (JM & MA 2012, 51:59-52:19).

A second term for the *jesere* is *ŋwaareyko*. It is difficult to find an English approximation for this word. Several research participants chose the French root *quémander* ('to beg') to render the word. They hastened to add that musicians are not like ordinary beggars even though beggars may also be described as *ŋwaareyko* (HA1 2014, 15:45-19:07; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 15:26-16:00; Maiga & Maiga 1978:24; Hale 1990:180). The word literally means 'someone who asks', or figuratively, 'someone whose hand is outstretched' (AB 2013, 56:22-57:01). When the term is applied to musicians, it is pejorative. It describes any *jesere* who lives by his words, through praise-singing (HG 2014, 44:54-45:19). When I asked MN what the term *ŋwaareyko* meant to him, he replied, 'Well, he just doesn't want to work.' (2012, 30:07) Another participant stated it refers to a lazy person (JM & MA 2012, 53:47-54:30). For some the term includes all *jesere*, but for others it only designates the more vulgar *jesere* who descend from the slave class or stoop to praise-singing to extract money from people (Karimou 1972:98–100; Hale 1998:352–3; MB1 2012, 38:31-39:17; GV 2016, 37:13-37:48).

While the terms *jesere*, *nyamakala*, and *ŋwaareyko* have quite different lexical meanings, there is considerable overlap in the application of the terms to Songhai musicians. Indeed, as I have shown, many Songhai use the words interchangeably. Others make slight distinctions between them. Almost all Songhai I interviewed,

however, classified musicians as *ŋwaareyko*. Since the 'profession' of asking is despised and discredited when a person could do other work, most Songhai consider the musician beneath their dignity, someone of baser character. Many would think twice before considering the profession, lucrative though it might be (AB 2013, 20:45-21:57; MN 2012, 34:06-34:23; Maiga & Maiga 1978:23).

Two other terms used to describe the *jesere* are *maabe* and *biyo kwimbe*. Of Fulani extraction, *maabe* is the preferred term for the *jesere* in Mali, but it is known in northern Niger as well (NY-A 2014, #II-A; HM2 2015, 46:02-46:37; Tamari 1991:234–5). People I interviewed said that the *maabe* is the same as the *jesere* and is generally associated with the court of the chief (BK3 2014, #II-B; IB & BB 2013, 12:04-12:12; HA2 2016, 43:46-44:49). *Biyo kwimbe* is the word for the *jesere* in the Dendi dialect of Songhai (BK1 & GA 2012, 22:21-22:53; GI 2012, 25:10-25:49).

5.3.2 Current Roles

The profession of *jesere* has been in decline since the advent of the colonial era. While one can still hear *jesere* music in villages and through electronic media, it is rapidly waning due to criticism from Islam, lack of active government support, loss of wealthy patrons, and the impact of Westernization, globalization, and urbanization. It is now confined mainly to the courts of chiefs, the homes of important families, television and radio programs, and celebrations (SS 2012, #III-D & #V; MH2, SI, & HS2 2015, 23:38-24:31; Bornand 2004a:167; DjeDje 2000:169). Nevertheless, the music of the *jesere* is still the default music of Songhai culture, to which other music is compared, and it plays a small, but important role in modern society.

Today, the *jesere* memorize the genealogies of important families, recite the stories of the Songhai, and tell the exploits of famous ancestors through epic poetry (MG-B 2013, #III-D-1; MB1 2012, 34:50-35:28; AM1 2013, 27:40-29:06). Their chief function, as already mentioned, is praise-singing, chanting the praises of free-born

people and exhorting them to bravery and good deeds (EK-A 2013, 19:21-20:26; GZ 2013, #I; GI 2012, 21:39-21:54). In this role, they enhance the reputation and exalt the values of the *burcin* (Bornand 2004b:91). They also perform at weddings, naming ceremonies, and festivals, sometimes acting as masters of ceremony on these occasions. Some have adapted their style to the electronic media, recording music in audio and video formats and appearing on radio and television to appreciative audiences. Two famous *jesere* mentioned often in my research are Djadou Sekou and Djeliba (MG-B 2013, #IX-B; HA1 2014, 12:08-12:44; Elders-A 2014, 13:12-14:40; Bornand 2002:278).

The instruments most closely associated with the *jesere* are the *moolo* and the *dondon*. In reality, there are key differences between the players of these instruments. According to one *nyamakala* I interviewed, a true *jesere* does not play the *dondon* (GZ 2013, #III). He said he no longer plays any instrument, and this is true for many *jesere* (GS 2012, 11:33-12:03; IB & BB 2013, 14:36-14:51). A *moolo* player, however, often accompanies the *jesere* when he recites epic poetry or chants praise songs (HA1 2014, 7:02-7:31; BK3 2014, #I-C; Hale 1990:60–61, 178–80). The *dondonkarey*, by contrast, are seen as a separate category of musician and sometimes as distinct from the *jesere*. They do not recite epics or narrate stories. Generally, the *dondonkarey* play their instruments at celebrations like weddings, namings, and festivals. They loudly proclaim the virtues of the listeners and seek compensation for their praise (MT 2013, 17:04-17:47; MB1 2012, 53:21-53:32; MS2 2013, 3:53-4:48). When my research participants referred to the *dondonkarey*, they always referred to them as descendants of former slaves. While they inherit their profession like other *jesere*, they are viewed as inferior to them (JD 2012, 28:38-29:17; HK 2013, 34:53-37:05).

I discovered slight distinctions between two types of singers in my research, with some overlap between the two types. First, there are the traditional *jesere/nyamakala*

attached to families, who chant epic poetry and recite genealogies at occasions like wedding ceremonies or at the chief's court (AS 2013, 17:31-18:01; HK 2013, 38:35-41:26). This type of singer may be female since women *jesere* rarely play instruments (BK1 & GA 2012, 4:44-4:55; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 16:16-16:39; MS2 2013, 17:48-18:05). Then there are the *jesere/ŋwaareyko*/*dondonkarey*, who show up impromptu at many celebrations to sing and ask for money. These *jesere* are exclusively male (HK 2013, 27:42-28:30; EK-A 2013, 17:07-17:28; AS 2013, 15:14-18:33).

5.3.3 Reputation

When I asked my research participants whether the *jesere* are reliable and have a good reputation, the responses were mixed. Ten said they are trustworthy and reliable (AS 2013, 22:60-24:08; GI 2012, 26:27-26:46; HG 2014, 47:41-48:49). Fourteen said they are untrustworthy and disreputable (Men 2012, #VII; MD2 2014, #IV-B & F; MB2 2012, 1:17:17-1:18:07). Fifteen gave conflicting responses (JM & MA 2012, 51:11-51:35, 59:46-1:01:12; IH 2014, 31:25-33:19; AM2 & AO 2014, 30:10-30:50). One reason for the contradictory replies lies in the tension between the ideal *jesere* of the past and the real *ŋwaareyko* of the present. In recent times, due to economic hardship or a desire to get rich, some Songhai from the freeborn classes have taken on the role of a *jesere*, mainly in urban areas (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 16:00-16:16; AB 2013, 57:33-58:04). These 'fake' *jesere* have not inherited the role and do not know the genealogies or the stories of the Songhai. Many of them play the *dondon* and chant *zamu* (Bornand 2004b:99). They give the real *jesere* a bad name and are often confused with them. They are perceived by the general population as parasites, beggars, public entertainers, liars, flatterers, and sycophants (Bornand 1999:295–6; MD2 2014, #IV-F; MB1 2012, 41:30-42:11; Hale 1990:41). The historian/genealogist/entertainer is still highly valued for his contributions to society, but that person has largely disappeared. He has been supplanted by a lazy, free-spirited, disrespectful, persistent 'panhandler' without shame

or inhibitions (AZ 2015, 1:05:17-1:06:31; JD 2012, 56:33-1:00:14; BK1 & GA 2012, 26:52-27:04). As the 'fake' *jesere* grow more and more numerous, the true profession gets belittled and driven underground.

Another reason for the contradictory replies is that people fear what the *jesere* say and the secrets they may reveal (Garba 1992:173–4). While they need them to enhance their reputations, people fear their words, which possess *nyama*, that ill-defined, mysterious force that has power over their behaviour (MN 2012, 42:00-43:35; Bornand 2004b:99–101). Victor Turner says these types of people have a liminal persona. While they are of low status, they have a kind of mystical power (1969:95, 112). HK put it this way,

> They have two reputations. They are feared. People are afraid of them. They are respected and feared at the same time, respected because they are with the chief – they live at the court of the chief; feared because of their mouths which can say … what they want of anyone. And you can't counter anything. That's why they are respected and feared at the same time. (2013, 41:26-41:58)

The words of a *jesere* are usually considered reliable and accurate when he relates the stories and genealogies of a family (TB-B 2013, 36:14-36:55; MN 2012, 45:48-46:55). When he flatters people for gain, publicly shames someone, or hurls insults, his words are considered unreliable (Women of DA 2013, 12:40-13:05). Either way, however, the *jesere* evoke a powerful response in people.

The censure of Islam further accounts for the ambiguous reputation of the *jesere*. Islamic scholars in Niger consider traditional musicians fakers and liars and are actively trying to suppress them. This more contrary view of music comes from outside Niger. The general population, however, does not seem entirely in agreement with it (HM2 2015, 52:52-55:03).

5.4 Specialization of Musicians

As a general rule, in the Songhai traditional music-culture, women sing and dance while men play musical instruments (GS 2012, 36:54-37:24; MN 2012, 34:37-35:11; MB2 2012, 52:28-53:29). When women do play musical instruments, it is often an idiophone

like the *kasa-kasa* or the *bum-bum*. Occasionally one will hear of a woman in the *jesere* clan who plays a drum or a woman *gooje* player who is part of a possession troupe, but they are rare. On the other hand, both women and men can be *zimas*, and I was able to interview one woman *zima* for this research. Men do 'sing', or, rather, they recite praise-poetry (*zamu*) and recount the epic stories of the Songhai. This type of singing crosses the boundary between music and language, and it often falls into both categories.

Men from the *burcin* class do not normally sing, dance, or play musical instruments. Eighteen of my research participants underlined the point that Songhai traditional society is highly categorized and restrictive (MS4 2015, 35:53-36:59; MB1 2012, 57:16-59:44; ZL 2015, 16:37-19:19; DeValve 2005, #I). Song and dance, as I have stated previously, is usually reserved for women or those from the former artisan or slave classes. While this traditional way of performing music is breaking down in the twenty-first century as young people and *tradi-moderne* musicians push aside old cultural inhibitions, there are still many who hold to traditional views concerning the suitability or unsuitability of a music career for their children.

5.5 *Tradi-Moderne* Musicians

While the focus of this thesis is on 'traditional' music, I need to say a few words about musicians who fuse traditional and modern elements. Many Afro-pop and Afro-jazz artists have become known world-wide since African states gained their independence (McLaughlin 1997; Durán 2006; Charry 2000b:242–88). Unfortunately, with two important exceptions, most Songhai musicians have not benefited from this renown. The first exception is Ali Farka Touré (1949?-2006), a Malian Songhai who is credited with the creation of the 'desert blues' genre and won two Grammies for his work. He often played the guitar but tuned it differently and adapted it to the style of the *gooje* and the *moolo* (Durán 2006:231; DH & MH1 2014, 11:25-14:16; Eyre 2000:200–203).

The other exception is the band Mamar Kassey, led by Yacouba Moumouni, a Songhai from Téra, who has made a name for himself since 2000 on the world stage (TB-B 2013, 33:14-33:37; BK3 2014, #II-A; YM 2016, 27:00-27:46). He plays a variety of traditional flutes (*seese*) and a 12-string *kora* and sings in a traditional style. His band uses the *moolo*, the *dondon*, and the *gaasu 2* mixed with electric guitars. His music is widely popular in Niger. The reader can listen to one of the band's songs at the following YouTube link: http://bit.ly/2kh4fai.

While most *tradi-moderne* musicians from Niger or the Songhai have not made it to the world stage, they are well-liked amongst the youth. Because of past government policies and the generally negative attitude of Muslims toward entertainment music, there has been little effort to promote such music at an official level (Bensignor 2006:281). Nevertheless, AM1 told me that this 'modern' music is rapidly replacing the traditional music of the *jesere* (2013, 23:12-24:01). While these musicians are sometimes classed as griots, they do not necessarily come from *jesere* families (IH 2014, #I; AB 2013, 3:57-5:48).

6. Dance

One aspect of music that I have not yet explored is movement. For Africans, the body is considered a musical instrument (Kidula 2013:83). Garba says that music and dance cannot be separated but constitute the same reality for Nigeriens (1992:173–4; Thiel 1985:83; HM4 2016, 1:13:39-1:14:31). Some type of movement or dance is associated with all the major musical genres and occasions amongst the Songhai. The Songhai love to dance and clap; however, they tend to be somewhat reserved in their dance styles (HA1 2014, 35:47-36:44; IH 2014, 47:41-50:11; AM1 2013, 41:30-43:53). For one thing, most married men of the *burcin* class do not dance (MB1 2012, 6:07-6:48; MG-B 2013, #III-E; IB & BB 2013, 10:08-10:21). HK said that dancing is considered 'beneath' a man because he is supposed to be the chief. Rather, it is reserved for

women, youth, and 'casted' people (2013, 59:42-1:00:30; IH 2014, 20:18-21:32). Furthermore, it is uncommon to see older folks dance with young people, and, except at weddings, to see men dance with women (MB2 2012, 14:48-15:47; GS 2012, 20:46-21:15). In short, while dance is important to Songhai people, in the traditional music-culture, it plays a prominent role only in the *fooley,* at weddings, at the installation of chiefs, and for young people's parties. I will explore the question of dance in the church more extensively in Chapter Six.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the traditional music-culture of the Songhai people as it manifests itself in the early twenty-first century. This information contributes to the overall research by giving a basis for comparison with the Songhai Protestant church. I have shown first that there is a variety of sometimes contradictory ideas about music as internal and external forces exert pressure for change on Songhai society. Second, I arranged the different musical genres into five categories with various sub-genres under each category. Third, I described thirteen traditional instruments which still have some use in contemporary society. Fourth, I looked at the traditional and *tradi-moderne* musicians and their role and reputation. Finally, I briefly noted the role of dance in traditional Songhai culture. In the next chapter, I will describe and analyse the music of the Songhai Protestant church and compare the music of the church to the music of the traditional culture. In the next two chapters, my focus will be on what the church is singing and why.

Chapter Six: Protestant Songhai Music-Culture

1. Introduction

'After theology, I accord to music the highest place and the greatest honor.' – Martin Luther (Luther 1959:980; Schalk 1988:55)

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

The Protestant church subculture of Niger is poised precariously between the strong group/strong grid subcultures of tradition and Islam and the weak group/weak grid subcultures of the West and the nation-state. It is a marginalised, minority community which falls into Mary Douglas' enclave type of subculture (strong group/weak grid). In this chapter, I will present an introduction to music as it is currently practised in the Songhai/Zarma Protestant subculture. I start with three musical vignettes, each taken from a different case study, which illuminate different aspects of church worship. I then proceed to outline what a typical worship service looks like, including the attitudes toward traditional music in church and the practice of dance. In the main body of the chapter, I examine the Songhai church music-culture using four headings I used in Chapter Five: ideas about worship and music, song repertoires and genres, musical instruments, and musicians.

As I stated in Chapter One, Section 3, few have undertaken an examination of worship music amongst a particular ethnolinguistic group or in a particular geographical region of Africa. Some scholars have written about church music in Africa in general, but there are few studies of peoples and regions and their distinct approach to church music.[1] This chapter is devoted to looking at the worship beliefs and practices of

[1] For example, Nketia (1958) and Muchimba (2008) talk about music in the African church in general. Kidula is one of the few who deals with music in a particular ethnolinguistic context, the Avalogooli of Kenya (2013).

Protestants from one particular ethnolinguistic group in one particular region: the Sahel on the bend of the Niger River.

1.2 Three Vignettes

1.2.1 Vignette #1

Hands raised, eyes closed, head lifted, brow furrowed: the posture of the song leader at the Evangelical Baptist Church of Goudel (EBCG) indicated that he was emotionally and reverentially worshipping with gusto. As I looked around the congregation, others were also engaged in the song as evidenced by their body language and their ability to sing the words from memory. No one was dancing or clapping. The song was sung in a slow tempo with a soft drum accompaniment, but the congregation was fully engaged in the song. Strikingly for me, though the words were in Zarma, the tune was a familiar melody written by William Bradbury in the mid-nineteenth century. Most English speakers know it as, 'Just As I Am'. The Zarma title is, 'Ay No Zunibikoyni Gumo' ('I Am a Great Sinner'), and the words echo the message of the English song. It was the last song of the service. Though it fit with the message, the American tune seemed jarring to me. Furthermore, the words did not seem to fit the tune, and the song dragged. My perception of what is appropriate worship music in a Zarma church was being seriously challenged. It is true that this church was founded by missionaries, and the church possesses a songbook full of translated Western tunes. Still, it surprised me how well the song was liked (DeValve 2013b). (The reader may listen to the song at the following link: http://bit.ly/2lTbIwv.)

1.2.2 Vignette #2

I was interviewing the pastor of the Assemblies of God Church – Kombo (AGK). We were talking about traditional musical instruments, especially the *gooje*, the instrument most closely associated with the *fooley*. According to the pastor, the church wanted to obtain a *gooje* to accompany singing in church. It had a big sound, and the church felt it

would add an authentic element to worship. In addition, it could be made locally at minimal cost using readily-available materials. There was one problem, however. Everyone they asked to make a *gooje* said they would have to offer a sacrifice for it first. The church was told, 'You cannot make … a *gooje* without spilling blood.' (AY 2014, 15:34-15:50) The *gooje* is considered such a sacred instrument that it requires blood sacrifices before its consecration, usually a white, a red, and a black chicken (Stoller 1989a:113). This condition was totally unacceptable to the church, and they refused to commission its fabrication. For them, it meant disregarding their beliefs and assenting to a philosophy of life which they condemned and with which they disagreed (DeValve 2014c).

1.2.3 Vignette #3

One of the main features of the Hosanna Church – Kollo (HCK) was the obvious desire to include everyone in the worship service. This manifested itself in several ways. A youth choir led the congregation in singing using locally made instruments, the *kasa-kasa* and *jembe*. Several times during the service, various members, both men and women, got up to dance in a circle between the seats and the pulpit. The most striking feature of this multicultural church, however, was the invitation to members and attendees from various ethnolinguistic groups to sing songs in their native tongue. This occurred on three of the five Sundays of the case study. My wife and I even joined in and sang songs in English. The church leadership, largely Zarma, tried to be inclusive, making the worship service more participatory and lively. There were songs in four major Nigerien languages: Hausa, Zarma, Gurmancéma, and Tamajaq, as well as in French and three languages from the coast of Africa. These song fests were a celebration of both the unity and diversity of the church, bringing everyone together but not papering over differences. Immediately after one of these songs in Zarma, an elder made the comment quoted at the beginning of this thesis: 'The Zarma do not have any

of their own [worship] songs. They are all translated from other languages.' (HY in DeValve 2015c:5)

2. Worship in the Songhai Context

2.1 Typical Worship Service

In the Songhai churches I surveyed, much of the form and content has been borrowed from outside sources. Indeed, the Songhai had not had any experience with Christian worship before the twentieth century, and the missionaries imported their ideas about proper worship into Niger. The standard format for Protestant churches throughout the region consists of two main parts: a liturgy of music and a liturgy of the Word.

The liturgy of music may last an hour or more. The congregation sings in unison, often at top volume and in a high pitch. In Pentecostal/charismatic churches one feature of this part of the service is a time of singing known as *louange et adoration*. Together, the two words are roughly equivalent to the English phrase 'praise and worship'. Many Nigerien Christians use these words as synonyms for church music (JD 2012, 1:09:40-1:12:11; AM1 2013, 31:40-36:58; IH 2014, 59:17-1:00:40). *Louange* is a sequence of uninterrupted, up-tempo songs, often accompanied by movement, loud instruments, and clapping, in praise and honour of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. *Adoration* is an unbroken chain of slower, quiet, more meditative songs, usually with little movement, that prepares the listener for the message to follow. In churches that used this format, there were usually fewer songs of *adoration* than of *louange* (a total of 87 *adoration* songs compared with 214 *louange* songs) (DeValve 2015a; DeValve 2016a), reflecting a penchant for animated songs of celebration over slower songs of contemplation. In the non-Pentecostal churches, this feature is not as prominent. There are still lively and slow songs, but the division between them is not as distinct. Three people from these churches pointed out that the contemporary usage of the phrase *louange et adoration* reflects a reductionist view of worship. They say that Christians who use this expression

have confused the biblical meaning of worship for a type of music (HK 2013, 45:05-46:54; JM & MA 2012, 2:54-8:31; DA 2014, #X).

The liturgy of the Word comes after the liturgy of music and consists of the reading of Scripture and a sermon. The liturgy of the Word is often shorter than the liturgy of music, but since most churches I surveyed (eighteen out of twenty-three) translated the sermon from French into Songhai, it could last an hour.

The liturgy of the Table, or Communion, is more of an optional element than an essential in many churches. It was noticeably absent in several churches I surveyed. In general, most Nigerien Protestant churches have Communion on the first Sunday of the month. I was present at seven churches on the first Sunday of the month, but only three had communion that day. Two other churches had a communion service on a day other than the first Sunday of the month. Only one church I chose for a case study practised the sacrament. Some churches seem to celebrate it only on rare occasions.

Other elements of the worship service included announcements, offerings, greetings, testimonies, and prayers. These were usually interspersed within the liturgy of music or came after the liturgy of the Word. Most churches closed with a final song, a benediction, and a sending out of the people.

2.2 Traditional Music in Church

One discovery of my research was that a surprisingly large number of Christians (28 out of 54 individuals) value traditional forms of music and are open to using them in church. One musician I interviewed had this to say about using the *gaasu* in worship,

> IH: For me … there is no problem in that. But some people would not agree because they would say, 'No, ah, it's in the *fooley* that you learned that'. But music … we all know that music is for God and that Satan stole [it]. So … for me …
> John: That Satan … stole [it]?
> IH: That Satan stole [it]. It's a music that Satan stole that used to be done for God. So, I saw that … for me … there is no problem with that. (2014, 9:03-9:53)

Other participants expressed similar sentiments (Elders-A 2014, 13:12-14:40; HA1 2014, 29:36-30:26; TB-B 2013, 21:24-22:08). DA even said to me, 'We need to return

to our family', by which he meant that Songhai Christians need to revisit their roots, their traditions (2014, #XXII-D).

At the same time, there are clearly forms of traditional music that many Christians find inappropriate or unacceptable in church worship. Praise-singing is inappropriate when used to flatter people, the main use for the genre in the culture (JD 2012, 33:13-33:53; Elders-A 2014, 37:57-39:09; Hale 1998:47–9). Songs that insult people or are viewed as dishonouring to God are clearly unacceptable (EK-A 2013, 12:54-13:13; MB2 2012, 1:22:12-1:22:45). Any music that distracts from the worship of God or negates good morals is to be eschewed (MB2 2012, 54:15-55:53; JM & MA 2012, 36:29-39:30; BK2 2013, 0:00-2:30). This latter condition is admittedly vague and subjective and could be used to exclude any type of music, but my participants were talking about music that has sexual connotations or is frivolous and superficial. Participants further stated that rhythms or melodies (and definitely words) coming out of spirit worship are unacceptable in church (AM1 2013, 12:35-13:21; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 5:09-5:54; IH 2014, 10:19-10:48). Two participants summarized the idea of unacceptable music by saying it is the motivation behind the music that is often important and not just the music itself (Elders-A 2014, 11:56-12:54; JD 2012, 44:50-54:23). While this criterion is hard to judge, it requires knowing people and possibly vetting music before or during a worship service (Elders 2015, 1:01:39-1:03:25).

2.3 Dance

In many churches in Africa, dance is an important and normal part of the liturgy of music (King 2004:297, 304–305; Kidula 2013:141–5). In Songhai/Zarma churches, however, dance tends to be more reserved than what I have witnessed in other churches of the sub-region. Aside from a two-step shuffle by the choir or some swaying in the congregation, it is often uncommon. There are at least four reasons for this. In the early decades of the Nigerien church, any type of dance was rare. Up to the end of the

twentieth century, most Protestant churches in Niger and northern Benin were associated with either SIM or EBM, and these missions discouraged dance. Some of these churches still exclude dance from worship (CO in Men 2012, #XI; GI 2012, 37:35-37:44; HK 2013, 59:42-1:00:18). According to MA, in urban centres, a restrained type of movement has been introduced in many churches, but even this is a recent innovation, coming at the end of the 1990s (2012, 21:43-22:45). MB2 said some churches have measured forms of dance but restrict it to occasions like weddings or to segregated groups of women and men (2012, 14:48-15:47). A second reason is that the censure of Islam constrains Christians in Muslim-dominated countries. This was the explanation advanced by at least one research participant (HA1 2014, 35:47-36:44). Another reason is that dance was severely restricted to certain occasions and groups of people in the traditional culture, and this posture has affected how people practise dance in the church (AM1 2013, 41:30-43:53). Finally, many churches are fearful of 'modern' dancing, especially the kind seen in nightclubs that is sexually explicit (IH 2014, 47:41-50:11; EK-A 2013, 29:57-30:32; JD 2012, 2:48-3:24).

As I stated in Chapter Two, Section 5.2, a flood of new, Pentecostal groups entered Niger in the 1990s. These groups have a more exuberant style of worship that includes dance. Their dynamism changed the style of worship in many of the older, established churches (JM & MA 2012, 21:43-22:45; AZ 2015, 1:25:08-1:26:47). Some contemporary Christians refer to David dancing before the ark as an example to follow. For instance, one participant stated,

> If it's in the Bible for worshipping God, I don't really see any problem [with it]. We have even seen … King David himself, he got up to dance, you know … So, actually, I think that if one could … differentiate this from the dance of the world, I don't really see any problem. (GS 2012, 1:00:24-1:01:36)

Today most Christians accept some form of movement in church, and Europeans might characterize it as dance. Except in some Pentecostal churches or those with Africans from neighbouring countries, however, dance is still very restrained (Mayet 2005, Scene

#11; AS 2013, 34:33-35:03). It is especially hard for first-generation Songhai Christian men to dance (MB1 2012, 6:48-7:27; AY 2014, 1:29:03-1:29:27).

2.4 Indigenous Elements in Worship

I will refer to indigenous elements in worship in the following sections, but there are several comments I need to make about my observations. While borrowing songs and tunes from outside sources, Songhai Christians have 'Africanized' elements of the liturgy of music, altering them to fit the local context (Kidula 2008b:43; Muchimba 2008:38–43; DH & MH1 2014, 1:02:33-1:03:10). The first element is singing songs from memory. Of the twenty-three churches surveyed, only nine used any kind of printed hymnbook. All of the churches sang at least some songs from memory, especially during the *louange et adoration* part of the liturgy. Some churches sang all their songs from memory. This seemed to be generally true of the Pentecostal churches.

Another indigenous element was call-and-response. This technique is common in many parts of Africa (Merriam 1959a:67; Stone 2004:64–8). In call-and-response, the leader or cantor sings out a line, and the congregation or choir responds with the same or another line in a kind of refrain. In my field notes, I counted at least sixty songs where this technique was used. While that is only a small fraction of the total of 714 songs, the leader often sang the first line of many songs before the congregation joined in to repeat it.

Another technique common in many African churches is the repetition of songs or lines to reinforce a point (Ong 1977:418, 424–6). This was demonstrated numerous times throughout the course of this research. On one occasion, the church repeated a song five times in different languages while the offering was taken (DeValve 2013d:3). In another church, I noted that four of the fifteen songs were repeated three or more times during the service (DeValve 2016c).

I noted four other characteristics of music in Songhai churches which are common in many places in Africa. The first is that borrowed tunes with accidentals got smoothed out so that the notes reflected those of the song's key. My musician friends tell me that many Africans have a hard time recognizing and singing accidentals (NG-C 2016; Jones 1976:22; Muchimba 2008:105). Another common element of Protestant Songhai liturgical music was building to a climax. The tension often built up in the *louange* section of the liturgy before the release came in the slower, calmer songs of *adoration*. A third characteristic is clapping on beats one and three in a four/four metre instead of on beats two and four. This is probably a reflection of the trochaic nature of African languages where music commonly ends on a weak beat (Muchimba 2008:103–106; Jones 1976:22). The last characteristic I noted was improvisation. Clapping, lyrics, notes, and rhythms were sometimes modified or added as the liturgy progressed. Some of these improvisation techniques were likely borrowed from other musical genres like reggae and highlife (NG-B 2014; Kidula 2008b:52).

3. Christian Ideas about Worship and Music

3.1 What is Worship?

The concept of worship is hard to express in French and Songhai since neither language has equivalent terms to English, with all its nuances and connotations. Each language uses words which are closer to the biblical meanings of the word than the current usage of 'worship' in English. Where the NIV has 'worship', the Zarma Bible uses *sududu* ('to bow down'), *may* ('to serve'), and *saajaw* ('to serve'). The standard *Louis Segond* version of the French Bible uses a variety of terms for 'worship', including: *adorer* ('to worship': eighty-six times), *se prosterner* ('to bow down': fifty-seven times), *servir* ('to serve': fifty-three times), *offrir un culte* ('to offer worship': nineteen times), and *craindre* ('to fear': seventeen times) (DeValve 2012). Worship, however, is broader than all these words and includes praise (*louange*), sacrifice, and prayer (Schönweiss &

Brown 1978; Schultz & Esser 1978; Thiele & Brown 1978), as well as hearing the Word preached. I mostly used the Zarma *sududu* and the French *adorer* in my interviews, but they may have different connotations than the English word 'worship'.

My working definition for worship (see Chapter Three, section 4.1.1) comes from the words of Heb. 13:15-16: a 'sacrifice of praise' and a 'sacrifice of service', or 'adoration and action' (see also Ps. 50:23). For the most part, Christians I interviewed identified worship with adoration, or a sacrifice of praise. Typical were the sentiments of AB, who said worship is, 'bringing everything from the bottom of your heart … all this goodness that God has done for you as a human being … to rejoice' (2013, 1:13:01-1:13:36). MB1 agreed, saying that worship 'is a way of expressing … one's gratitude, one's joy, or it's a way of exalting the name of God' (2012, 0:52-1:14). Others said it is when we come aside to contemplate the greatness, the power, and the depth of God (BK2 2013, 40:24-40:58; IH 2014, 56:33-57:15). Still others said that worship is a time where we approach God together to listen to him (Church 2015, 50:49-51:31).

The above statements explicitly recognize two things: a God who has acted on behalf of humankind, and an intentional response of joy and gratitude for God's character and actions. MA gave the example of a president who visits a town. Even before he arrives, people line the streets, and musicians play instruments and sing in his honour. This action validates the power or worth of the president (2012, 5:30-6:09). Five participants went further and emphasized that worship is an act of submission to God, echoing the two most common biblical words for worship, שׁחה and προσκυνέω (Women 2013, #V-A; Elders-A 2014, 33:48-34:09; HK 2013, 45:05-45:52; AY 2014, 1:10:11-1:10:26; HM1 & AI1 2015, 43:56-44:20). Only two participants mentioned service as an aspect of worship (JM & MA 2012, 42:48-43:05; MD1 2014, 1:05:27-1:05:56).

3.2 Where and When to Worship?

Most Christians in this research stated that one can worship God anywhere and at any time (HA1 2014, 28:00-28:15; Youth 2013, #V-A; HM1 & AI1 2015, 44:21-44:46). MB1 said, 'I think that one can worship God anywhere, not necessarily just in church. One can worship him at home. One can worship him … sometimes when I'm on my motorbike, I praise God.' (2012, 1:23-1:36) Only one person limited worship to a church setting (JD 2012, 1:09:40-1:12:11). On the other hand, all the Christians in this research recognized the special nature of corporate worship. IH stated,

> We can worship [God] not only in church. We can worship him anywhere … in our houses, in town, on the road, wherever you want, you can worship him. Now the church has set a day on which people gather to worship God … in the same place, which is the church. (2014, 57:15-57:54)

3.3 Is Music Essential in Church?

When I started asking this question in interviews, I tried to phrase it exactly as it is in the heading. It is difficult to express in Songhai, however, without borrowing the French word *musique*. Over time, I realised that people were interpreting the question to mean, 'Are musical instruments necessary in church?' I had thought the question included both singing and musical instruments. In later interviews I concentrated on using either the Songhai or French words for song as the starting point of the discussion and letting them make the connection to instrumental accompaniment.

There are four main ways to answer this question. At the two opposite extremes one could reply either that both should be excluded from worship or that both are indispensable to worship. In the middle are two intermediate options: either singing is essential with musical instruments excluded or singing is essential with musical instruments optional. The spectrum of possible options looks like this:

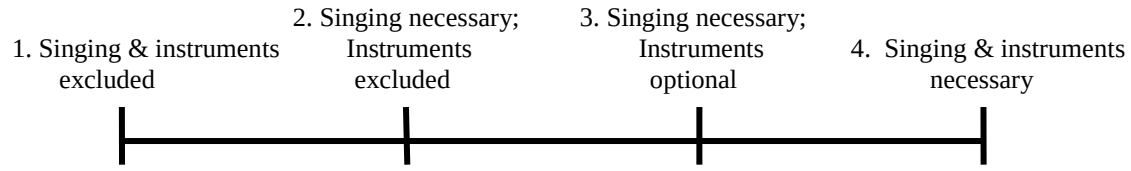


Table 6-1: Possible Responses to the Question, 'Is Music Essential in Church?'

Only four research participants or groups acknowledged the possibility of the first option (GV 2016, 44:14-45:45; MD1 2014, 33:18-34:43; MD2 2014, #IV-C; Youth 2015, 18:00-19:47). In general, Christians could not conceive of worship without singing and/or music because it is one of the best ways to express praise and adoration to God (MB2 2012, 6:01-6:40; MB1 2012, 2:56-3:33; GS 2012, 55:13-56:21). Nineteen participants or groups chose the third option. They stated that singing is essential in church, but musical instruments are not (BK2 2013, 42:43-45:03; HA1 2014, 25:24-26:10). In this group most preferred the use of musical instruments, but one man stated that he makes a distinction between song and accompaniment. He was emphatic that one can praise God without the use of musical instruments (HK 2013, 50:19-51:21). This opinion is in line with much Christian thinking of the past (Stapert 1994:387–92; Wilson-Dickson, 2003:28, 65). Also in this group were many who made no reference to musical instruments but insisted on song. Typical amongst them was JE1, who said, 'It shows that we're rejoicing to sing for God.' (2013, 25:51-26:20) Others said that we were created to praise God and it is a commandment to do so (AS 2013, 30:39-31:45; IH 2014, 1:04:19-1:05:08; HA2 2016, 55:23-55:44). One young lady observed, 'The angels sang before us; therefore, we must sing.' (Youth 2013, #V-C)

The second group of nine people chose the fourth option. One man said that when it is just voices, people get tired easily, but with accompaniment, they can sing for an hour without tiring (JD 2012, 1:06:25-1:07:07). A pastor stated that music helps focus the mind and set aside distractions (AM1 2013, 34:57-36:58). One woman said,

> Music is what we use for the tune, the song's tune. If it's the *moolo*, it helps us to know the tune. It also makes the song sound pleasing. It makes the song sound better. And people who are singing will do it with joy when there is music. (MB2 2012, 6:43-7:29)

Some acknowledged that while it is possible to worship without singing or musical instruments, the worship service would be pretty boring. Music helps to revive the soul and to remember the words (HA1 2014, 26:10-27:01; Women 2013, #V; GI 2012, 32:46-33:24).

3.4 What Is the Role of Music in Church?

This question relates directly to the last one, and there were a variety of answers. They tended to fall into five main categories. The first was a common response amongst Christians: to praise and glorify God. One musician stated, 'The role that music plays in church is … to worship and praise God.' (IH 2014, 1:01:41-1:03:02) He went on to say that the other elements of worship – the offering and the message, for instance – will be unnecessary in heaven, but believers will continue to praise and worship God, so they need to learn to do that now. A second category was that song expresses emotions. The most common emotion identified was that of joy and elation (JM & MA 2012, 8:31-12:22; AB 2013, 1:13:01-1:16-34; MD2 2014, #IV-C). This matches the shared Songhai perception of music as celebratory, something for joyous occasions, but it is also characteristic of the church worldwide. A third category was that singing is a powerful teaching/mnemonic tool (AB 2013, 11:36-11:55; Men 2012, #III; MD1 2014, 31:04-34:23). In a culture where many prefer oral means of communication, music has the ability to fix a particular message in people's minds (MB2 2012, 1:08:57-1:10:03; BK1 & GA 2012, 57:47-58:32). Thus, Christians sing their beliefs and believe what they sing, or as Roberta King puts it: *lex canendi, lex credendi* ('how one sings is how one believes') (King 2008b:117; Castle 1990:190; Hawn 1999:117).

The last two categories were that singing is an act of proclamation or witness and that it promotes unity. Among those who listed the former answer, MD1 stated that music for worship is not really different from music for proclamation. He said, 'Anything you use in church is for everyone. And we use hymns over the radio, use

them on tapes. So, eventually everyone's going to be listening.' (2014, 52:29-52:52) Others agreed, especially when the language is Songhai (Choir 2012, #IV; MB2 2012, 4:28-5:22; GS 2012, 32:01-33:35). The latter response was mentioned by two people. One stated that music not only shows our unity but helps us think with one mind (MD2 2014, #IV-D). The other used the word 'harmony' to show how music links God, his people, and his creation (AB 2013, 1:22:12-1:22:58).

3.5 Words

Songhai Christians place a strong emphasis on song lyrics. This is one way the church follows the culture, where words have special significance or power (Chapter Five, Section 2.1) According to Sathianathan Clarke, hearing is a characteristic emphasis of oral cultures, where sound is central to thought and communication (1999:150). The distinct emphasis on words by believers was something I had not anticipated, but it comes out strongly in twelve interviews and in the church worship observations. HK observed that the Zarma like to hear what is said in a song (2013, 1:01:51-1:02:10). MB2 stated that the words of a song will show if it is suitable for church (2012, 1:21:31-1:22:12). People in the interview focus groups expressed similar views (Women 2013, #I-A-3; Youth 2015, 11:05-12:03). This theme was reiterated many times in the course of this research, and I will return to it in Chapter Seven.

4. Song Repertoires in Songhai Christian Worship

4.1 Origin of Worship Songs

One thing became very clear in my observations of church worship services: the preponderance of songs sung in Protestant Songhai/Zarma churches have a foreign origin. In the twenty-three churches I observed (including the case studies), I counted a total of 714 songs. Of the total, 468, almost two-thirds (65.5 per cent), were sung in French. All of these song tunes and texts came either from the West or other parts of Africa. Of the 714 total songs, 181 (25 per cent) were sung in Zarma, but 143 of these

(79 per cent of the total Zarma songs) used borrowed tunes and translated texts. Of the 649 songs sung in French and/or Zarma, at least 609 of them (94 per cent) were of foreign origin (DeValve 2015a; DeValve 2016a). Vignette #1 gives an example of one of these borrowed songs and shows how it has become part of the treasured repertoire of one church. Another example of a chorus coming from outside Niger is 'Dieu Tu Es Bon' ('My Lord, You Are Wonderful'), which can be accessed at the following link: http://bit.ly/2kRyKTH (Agawu 2003:11). Three churches I observed sang this song.

Eleven Christians commented on the foreign origin of the melody or text of worship music in their churches (DH & MH1 2014, 46:16-47:18; BK1 & GA 2012, 45:56-46:48; MB1 2012, 9:15-9:41). TB said that 'music in church is a transposed music. It is translated word for word and the original melody is not changed.' (2013, #X-A) In a follow-up interview, he mentioned the song, 'Come and Go With Me', which is well known in its Zarma version, as an example (2013, 1:06:51-1:08:01). The link for the song is here: http://bit.ly/2lTfHJn. Thirteen other people or groups noted that church music is very Western, even when the song language is Zarma (Church 2015, 43:34-44:25; MS1 2010, #I; AZ 2015, 3:56-4:45). One congregation expressed its frustration with so many French songs, remarking, 'some say the church is for Westerners' (2015, 52:30-53:12). Other participants noted the flood of songs coming from churches to the south (JD 2012, 1:02:43-1:03:12; AM1 2013, 7:00-7:11; BK1 & GA 2012, 41:02-41:34). These comments put the impressions I recorded in Vignette #1 into perspective.

4.2 Song Repertoires

Thirty-two Christians who took part in this research expressed their dissatisfaction with the current repertoire of worship songs. One flatly said that the songs do not respond to the church's needs (MB1 2012, 10:47-11:01). Some specifically stated that there are only a handful of songs emerging from the Songhai context and that this is insufficient

(TB-A 2013, #X-C; HK 2013, 53:01-53:26; Choir 2012, #VII). Others acknowledged that it is a common tendency to repeat the same songs and that, even when there is a hymnal, many good songs never get sung (JM & MA 2012, 33:13-34:10). Still others stated that the church always needs new songs, so there are never enough (JD 2012, 1:05:54-1:06:20; EK-A 2013, 28:29-29:05; AS 2013, 30:00-30:38). While nine participants indicated that they are satisfied with the current repertoire of worship songs (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 25:45-25:51; GI 2012, 28:04-28:36; MD1 2014, 30:31-31:37), the great majority desire to see the repertoire of worship songs expand.

The felt need of forty-three Christians, furthermore, was for more songs in Songhai (MD2 2014, #IV-B; AB 2013, 1:26:09-1:27:15; JM & MA 2012, 33:48-34:34). MB1 commented that 'unfortunately, the repertoire is very limited … because there are a lot more songs in other languages than in Zarma.' (2012, 16:17-16:33) Women, older people, and those from rural areas generally preferred songs in Songhai over those in other languages (EK-A 2013, 26:29-27:41; Women 2013, #III-A; HA1 2014, 31:35-32:30). While two groups and one individual were content with translated versions of French or English songs (Men 2012, #X; Youth 2013, #III-B; MD1 2014, 32:25-32:47), others wanted more original compositions using melodies and texts inspired by the Songhai/Zarma music-culture (TB-A 2013, #XII; HK 2013, 52:17-52:42; HA2 2016, 57:23-58:37). While some people pointed to musicians who are already creating songs (Elders-A 2014, 30:43-31:34; IH 2014, 40:16-42:02; Youth 2015, 13:30-14:20), others said there are few songs created by Zarma people, and that the Zarma people lack the creativity and know-how to create new songs (TB-A 2013, #X-C; BK2 2013, 53:43-56:12; Elders 2015, 46:43-47:45; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 24:02-25:00). I found some participants a bit defensive when I commented on the lack of locally-created worship songs. Their retort was, 'But there are songs written by Zarma people.' (Women 2013, #III-B) Most of these are translations of Western texts using Western tunes, however.

While many people expressed a desire for more worship songs in Songhai, they also liked tunes that come from Europe and North America. Many of these are in French. For instance, there are the hymns missionaries brought from America or Europe. An example of this is the well-loved 'Quel Ami Fidèle et Tendre' ('What a Friend We Have in Jesus'). The reader can listen to it here, sung by the AD-1 congregation: http://bit.ly/2ro97AP. There are also many French choruses drawn from Pentecostal sources, such as '*Il N'Y A Vraiment Personne Comme Jésus*', which was sung in French or Zarma in five of the churches I surveyed. The AGK sung it three times over the course of the case study I conducted there (DeValve 2014c: 19 Oct, 02 Nov, 09 Nov). The French version can be found here: http://bit.ly/2m59MAZ and the Zarma version here: http://bit.ly/2n94bKA. I have heard it numerous times in other churches, and it is sung in other parts of the continent, including this Setswana version from southern Africa: http://bit.ly/2lRNqpq. The lyrics may be translated as follows:

> There is really no one like Jesus. There is really no one like him. I walked and walked (No one, no one). I searched and searched (No one, no one). I turned and turned (No one, no one). There is really no one like him. (My translation)

Songs like these are popular not only for their simplicity and repetition, but for the gestures and movement that accompany them. It is not uncommon to see a whole congregation standing and gesticulating as they sing. The standard repertoire in many churches consists of hymns and choruses like these coming from outside the Songhai heartland.

During the interviews, I asked some Christians to tell me what their favourite church songs were. The answers were astonishing. In one focus group interview, the men mentioned songs translated from English with titles like 'There Is Power in the Blood' and 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye' and called for translations of more songs from the French hymnal *Sur les Ailes de la Foi* (*On the Wings of Faith*) (Men 2012, #IX & #X). The 23 individuals who answered the question mentioned a total of thirty-nine

different songs. Sixteen of these were in French, and all of them came from the West or other African countries. Of the twenty-three songs in Zarma, twenty tunes were borrowed from Western hymns. For example, two participants mentioned the song *Baako Kulu Si Danga Koyo Yesu* ('There Is No Friend Like King Jesus') as one of their favourites (MB1 2012, 11:11-11:25; GS 2012, 32:50-33:01). It is a translation of the hymn 'No, Not One' written by Johnson Oatman, Jr in 1895. The HCK used it once for a Zarma group song (DeValve 2015b:4), and the reader can listen to it at the following link http://bit.ly/2kXaWAn. The first verse translates as:

> There is no other friend (lit. one who loves) like King Jesus,
> Not even one, Not even one.
> Nor is there salvation in anyone else,
> Not even one, Not even one.
> Jesus is the one who helps us every day.
> His love has no end.
> There is no other friend like King Jesus,
> Not even one, Not even one. (AA et al. 1994:37)

Of the three remaining Zarma songs mentioned, I could not determine the origin of one song, but a second was composed by a Zarma lady and the third was *Wa Naanay* ('Put Your Trust'), cited by four participants from the same church. As far as I could tell, this is the only original Zarma song being sung regularly in Songhai/Zarma churches. It was written by a non-Nigerien Zarmaphone who was born and raised in Niger (TB-A 2013, #XV). It has simple lyrics and a pentatonic tune. I reproduce an edited and translated text of the song here. The audio is available at the link http://bit.ly/2kCY7Ye.

Refrain: Wa naanay, wa naanay	Put your trust, Put your trust,
Wa naanay Yesu Almasihu gaa. x2	Put your trust in Jesus Christ x2
A bu, a tun, Iri zunubey du yaafa.	He died, he rose. Our sins are forgiven.
1. Wa Yesu beerandi	1. Lift up Jesus
Da goyo kaŋ a te ndunnya ra. x2	For the work that he did on earth. x2
Wa maa baaro kaŋ Raabi	Listen to the news that the Lord
Kande araŋ se.	Has brought to you.
2. Da iri maa iri ma ta	2. If we hear, let us trust
Zama Yesu ga kaa ka ndunnya ciiti. x2	For Jesus will come to judge the world. x2
Han din hane man gaa n'araŋ ga koy?	In that day, where will you go?
(Anon 2005:49)	

When I asked my research participants why they liked borrowed songs from other countries, they all referred to the words. AB stated that it is not the tune, the chords, the sound, or the rhythm that is important, but the words. Referring to the French version of the song 'Seek Ye First', he stated that it is well crafted, calms the heart, and comes directly from the Bible (2013, 1:07:34-1:09:26). The link to this song is here: http://bit.ly/2n9cZjx. Some people mentioned that many songs express God's forgiveness and love for them (GI 2012, 31:15-31:49; IH 2014, 35:24-36:38; AS 2013, 28:32-28:57). MB1, commenting on the song *Baako Kulu Si Danga Koyo Yesu*, said that this is important because love and forgiveness are rarely expressed verbally in Songhai/Zarma culture (2012, 11:50-12:47). Some also shared that songs teach us about God and how we should respond to him (MB2 2012, 2:54-3:29; IH 2014, 37:59-39:02). Others commented on the hope and the joy the lyrics convey to them, both in this life and in the one to come. This was the case for the song 'Come and Go With Me', mentioned by three research participants (MB1 2012, 11:11-11:50; AS 2013, 27:24-27:55; BK1 & GA 2012, 36:54-37:17). Perhaps one clue to discovering why these songs are so popular can be found on the lips of the women at the EBCG: 'We know the words.' (2013, #I-D-3) People have become familiar with these songs, and with a lack of original songs in Zarma, they have become their favourites. Another clue to understanding the seeming preference for borrowed songs can be found in the words of this pastor: 'We are … in a purely modern context now. People like … to sing modern songs.' (MA in JM & MA 2012, 43:24-43:37)

4.3 Reactions to Pre-Selected Songs

In order to better determine the kinds of songs and song styles believers found most appealing and appropriate for worship in the Songhai context, I conducted an experiment during each of the three case studies. I chose three songs, two in French and one in Zarma. I played each song for the congregation of the AGCK; the women, youth,

and elders of the HCK; and the women, youth, and elders of the EBCG. After listening to an excerpt of the song, each group indicated whether they liked it and if it was suitable for worship. I also observed how the participants reacted to each song. Appendix Five (Case Study Reports) gives a fuller explanation of this experiment.

The first song I played was 'Abba, Père' ('Abba, Father'). The song can be heard here: http://bit.ly/2kXbFkO. My first shock came when most people did not recognize the song. I have heard it sung in Niger, but with a faster tempo and instrumental accompaniment. The verbal feedback to the song varied from tepid acceptance to outright rejection. The young people at both the EBCG and the HCK said the tune was nice, but they could not understand the words. That was my second shock. I thought the words were very clear. One young lady said that the 'music' was too strong in comparison to the words in spite of the fact that the song is sung *a cappella* (Youth 2013, #I-A-3). The youth of HCK could not hear the 'voice' and initially thought the song was in English (2015, 24:25-25:29)! The AGK congregation commented on how slow the song was and did not seem to realise that there was no musical accompaniment (2015, 27:12-28:42). The women at EBCG stated diplomatically that it could be a song for *adoration* and that the singers were singing it 'in their style' (2013, #I-A). The harshest criticism came from the two groups of elders. The EBCG elders said it is not well adapted to the context and too classical and Western (2015, #I-A). The HCK elders had the most negative reaction. While they acknowledged that the melody was nice, they could not understand the words and could not even tell if the song was Christian (2015, 5:29-7:12). The pastor pronounced the verdict:

> Well, you know … every context has its way of doing music. And when that comes here, really, it means nothing to me. The church would really be … put to sleep, even, by those words. Because it means nothing. (MS4 in 2015, 7:34-7:58)

The next song was 'Voici le Jour'. This song can be accessed here http://bit.ly/2lQ51hS. This is a contemporary song, and almost everyone had their brows

furrowed, straining to catch the words. The song got a slightly better reaction than 'Abba Père', but the response was not overly enthusiastic. Some said the tune was sweet and could be used in church, but without knowing the lyrics, people were rather lukewarm toward it (Women 2013, #I-B; Youth 2013, #I-B; Church 2015, 30:25-31:19). The harshest critique of the song came, again, from the elders. At HCK, HG2 complained that the background music was too loud and drowned out the words. His fellow elder HY stated that he really liked the song, but the others replied that it is really very Western with all the electronic instruments and not really suited to the Nigerien context (2015, 11:59-15:00). The EBCG elders were even harsher in their critique. One man said that it made him want to dance with a twelve-year-old girl. The elders at this church agreed that the music was not much different from what one might find in a bar or nightclub, and that it could draw attention away from worshipping God (2015, #I-B).

The third song I played was 'Wa Naanay', the song mentioned in Section 4.2. The link for the song is here http://bit.ly/2kCY7Ye. In every instance, this song produced an immediate, enthusiastic response, as evidenced by the body language of the listeners. There were smiles, bright eyes, and nodding heads. People were singing along and laughing (Women 2013, #I-C-4; Women 2015, 22:04-22:37). The groups liked the fact that the song was in Zarma. They knew the song and said that the instruments complemented the voices. When I asked why they liked the song, the HCK youth said simply, 'It's singable.' (2015, 26:07-27:25) The EBCG elders said, 'It responds to the needs of the church', and, 'It shows respect for the context.' (2015, #I-C) The HCK elders added that the song combines both modern and traditional elements and is appealing and 'adapted to our reality' (2015, 17:25-18:11).

This experiment reveals several things. First and foremost, Songhai and Zarma believers do appreciate songs with traditional styles and tunes in their mother tongue. They like songs with a contemporary feel but which also connect them to their past.

Second, they want songs in which the words are not only compelling and intelligible but also heard and understood (Elders 2015, 5:41-5:53; Youth 2013, #I-D). This is a recurring theme of this research (AB 2013, 1:11:36-1:12:58; EK-A 2013, 12:54-13:13). A final lesson from this experiment is that while lyrics are central for the Songhai, the musical setting is also important. Musical accompaniment, especially rhythm, is very important to song. The reaction to 'Abba Père' shows that voices without instruments may be rejected, and the meaning is not clear. The comments I heard remind me again of the pilgrim and indigenizing principles. While the church should not blindly imitate the musical genres around it, neither should it ignore those musics. It needs to interact with the context and make worship intelligible to its members (Walls 2007b:7–8; Frame 1997:17–20; Schalk 1988:26), while at the same time guarding a counter-cultural and transcultural component in worship (Walls 2007b:8–9; Stauffer 1996:71).

4.4 Traditional Song Genres in Church

In Chapter Five, I presented four principal genres of Songhai music: liturgical, *jesere*, festive, and hortatory. In reviewing my data, I realised that Songhai Christians have appropriated all these genres and adapted them for church worship. In this area, they are not as far away from their music-culture as I had originally thought.

The purpose of liturgical music in Songhai culture is to aid in giving expression to the spirits and connecting with the supernatural. In possession-trance ceremonies like the *fooley*, the belief is that the invisible spirits visit the visible world and take control of their mediums (Rouget 1985:18–23, 91, 97, 133–9; Stoller 1989a:198). In a similar fashion, a number of Christians in this research expressed that the purpose of worship music is to 'usher us into the presence of God' or bring his Spirit near so that we may hear and experience him (AM1 2013, 35:30-36:58; BK2 2013, 40:53-42:11; Youth 2015, 18:24-19:15). AY stated that every song Christians sing should raise their spirits and put them in direct contact with God (2014, 1:13:50-1:14:19). JE2 expressed that

'God is enthroned on the praises' of his people (2013, 25:52-26:21). This oft-quoted phrase from Ps. 22:3 (NASB) served as proof text for several participants in their theological thinking about song in worship. By it they mean that people experience God's presence in a special way as they collectively sing his praise (Elders 2015, 1:08:18-1:11:02; ZL 2015, 21:07-21:19). The verse shows how people interpret the role of music in church. One of the HCK elders summarized the point this way: Praise 'brings down the Spirit of God' (2015, 1:08:45-1:08:59).

Jesere music has two main aspects: praise-singing and story-telling. While praise-singing in Songhai culture is directed at individuals and elevates people, praise-singing in the Songhai church is directed only to God (MB1 2012, 22:21-23:11; Elders-A 2014, 37:57-39:09). Praise has been a characteristic of Christian worship in all places and ages, so it is not startling to find it in the Songhai church. What is surprising is how many participants specifically linked the praise-singing of the *jesere* to the praise they offer to God. Fifteen said that *zamu* (praise-singing) can be used to designate songs of praise to God (MB2 2012, 51:15-52:28; JM & MA 2012, 40:44-41:56; HA1 2014, 30:54-31:35; JD 2012, 35:58-36:29; GV 2016, 50:25-50:54). Here is an enlightening dialogue I had with one of the Hosanna elders about praise:

> John: What is praise (*louange)*?
> HY: It's … praise (*éloge*),[2] praise (*éloge*) to the Almighty.
> John: *Zamu*?
> HY: That's it. Praise (*éloge*). It's what the griots do because adoration, praise (*louange*) also, is, in fact, like the griots. We are griots (laughs), you could say. We sing the praises (*éloge*) of the Almighty. It's what the griots also do to princes, to kings. They sing the praises (*éloge*) of kings. Because that is also praise (*louange*). (HY in Elders 2015, 1:07:25-1:08:59)

Story-telling (*deede*) is the other primary genre of the *jesere*. The Christian faith rests on a story, and the proclamation and retelling of that story are two purposes of

[2] HY used the word *éloge* here. *Éloge* and *louange* could both be translated 'praise' in English, but *éloge* is the closest French approximation to the Songhai word *zamu*. It comes from the same root as eulogy in English and is commonly used in French to mean 'sing the praise of someone or something'. Note how HY connects the two forms of praise in this conversation.

worship (Corbitt 1998:111–35; Jones 2010:27–37). *Deede* is like the role of the Songhai town crier or the priestly musician of ancient Israel, both of whom had a message to proclaim through musical sound. One research participant likened *deede* to telling Bible stories. She said that the genre of telling the stories of former Songhai warriors and kings is easily adaptable to the Christian context and pointed to stories and songs recorded in the early 1990s (see Chapter One, Section 3) which mirror the proverbs and stories of the Songhai people (MB2 2012, 1:06:07-1:06:55; Waridel 1994). She further stated that story songs help people remember the Word, especially those whose functional literacy is low (2012, 1:08:57-1:10:03; BK1 & GA 2012, 31:01-31:16; Choir 2012, #IV).

Songhai festive music also finds its parallel amongst Songhai Christians. This is a natural fit because music of celebration and joy has always been a part of the church. MB1 stated that music for festivals is easily adaptable to the church (2012, 20:43-21:32). MB2 told me the women of her church often welcomed new babies with traditional instruments, singing, and dancing (2012, 55:04-55:33). When I asked the young people at Hosanna what is the role of music in church, they responded with comments like, 'We are happy', and, 'There is joy, so we need to rejoice.' (2015, 18:00-18:24) While the adaptation of this function to the church should not come as a surprise, it is important to note how closely it resembles the traditional music-culture. Songhai Christians have adopted the cultural mind-set that sad and solemn occasions should generally exclude music. During my time in Niger, I have rarely seen songs at Christian funerals. JM further commented that songs of lament are virtually absent from the repertoire of most Songhai churches (2012, 9:35-12:22).

The final genre of hortatory songs is also easily adaptable to Christian worship. HG2 had the following to say about music in worship:

> Songs have a capacity to motivate during the service. Sometimes when you're leading, you feel that everyone is tired. Sometimes a chorus can raise spirits up or motivate people. Or, for example, you notice that some people are sleeping. Songs can then wake them up. So, songs can motivate the assembly. (2015, 1:09:47-1:11:02)

Others made similar comments (AM1 2013, 35:30-36:58; HA1 2014, 27:01-28:00). This role is like that of preaching (Corbitt 1998:173–92), and some participants made the comment that songs are full of theological content (MB2 2012, 1:22:12-1:22:29; MD1 2014, 33:18-34:23).

5. Musical Instruments in Songhai Worship

5.1 Instruments Used in Songhai/Zarma Churches

Photo 6-1: *Jembe*

Credit: Nancy DeValve

During my observations of worship services, I documented the instruments each church used. Of the twenty-three churches surveyed, only three did not use some kind of membranophone. The most common was the *jembe*, which I saw in fifteen churches (nearly two-thirds of the total – see photo 6-1). The *jembe* is a West African instrument that has become almost universal in Nigerien churches. While it originates from the Mande peoples of Guinea and Mali, it has spread across the region and has become such an important instrument that many West African peoples consider it their own (Charry 2000a). (A sound clip of the *jembe* played during a worship song can be heard here: http://bit.ly/2moP2Xl.) As in other areas of Africa, a foreign drum has fewer pagan connotations than a drum from within the culture and has been adopted for church use (Kidula 2013:121; HM1 & AI1 2015, 39:09-39:45). JD opined that the *jembe* is being replaced by the drum kit in most churches, but the facts belie his assertion (2012, 1:16:26-1:16:57). Rather, the *jembe* seems to be the rhythm instrument of choice, especially for smaller and under-resourced churches. It is relatively cheap, locally made, and readily available. This is in contrast to

the Western drum kit, which has to be imported, is expensive, and requires special training. Some research participants used the term *gumbe* to designate the *jembe* (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 6:43-6:57; Church 2015, 35:24-36:05; Youth 2013, #II-A; JE1-B 2014; EK-B 2014). Others used the word *dondon* for it (Youth 2015, 2:02-2:46; HK 2013, 26:29-26:42). In any case, no one expressed any reservations to using the *jembe* in church. In addition to the *jembe*, nine churches used other African drums. Nine also used the Western drum kit.[3] I counted a total of thirty-five membranophones in the twenty-three churches I surveyed (DeValve 2016b:2).

The most common musical instruments after the membranophones were the instruments classified as idiophones under the Hornbostel/Sachs taxonomy. Common amongst the idiophones was the *kasa-kasa* or beaded gourd (Chapter Five, Section 4.3.1), the only traditional instrument I saw used in Songhai churches on a regular basis. Ten churches I surveyed used at least one of them. Other idiophones included tambourines (I recorded six), metal gongs (four), wooden blocks (two), a metal pipe, and a simple *balafon* with five keys. There were a total of twenty-seven idiophones in the churches surveyed (DeValve 2016b:2).

Other instruments included seven electrophones (six bass guitars and one electric guitar), two chordophones (one acoustic guitar and one *moolo*), and two aerophones (one trumpet and one trombone). The *moolo* was used in one small church and played by a Gurmancé. In addition, nine churches had some kind of electronic keyboard (DeValve 2016b:2). There were a total of 20 melody instruments. Compare this to the total number of percussion instruments (62), and one notices a common characteristic of African churches: the predominance of rhythm instruments (Kidula 2013:80).

[3] Some churches used more than one kind of drum. There is, therefore, some overlap in churches using the *jembe* and those using other types of drums.

5.2 Instruments Christians Would Like to See in Church

One of the most revealing exercises that I did, mostly in the case studies, was to ask participants what instruments they would like to see in church that they do not already have. While nine groups or individuals mentioned locally-made instruments like the *dondon* (HM1 & AI1 2015, 45:41-46:27; AS 2013, 32:04-32:09; DA 2014, #IX), the most sought-after instruments were electric guitars, the keyboard, and the drum kit plus a sound system to amplify the music. Six of the seven groups I interviewed in the case studies plus the choir and men's group at the AB-1 church all mentioned these instruments. Only the women at the EBCG did not mention any of them (Women 2013, #II-E). Seven individual research participants also mentioned these instruments (MD1 2014, 1:00:05-1:01:08; MB1 2012, 14:04-14:15; GS 2012, 57:41-58:35). This is revealing not only because these instruments are unavailable for purchase in Niger, but also because few know how to play them. In addition, there is no music store in the entire country, and if an electronic instrument breaks down, there is no way to fix it (TB-B 2013, 31:34-32:12; AM1 2013, 13:38-14:09). Two respondents provided clues as to why these instruments are so popular. JD said it is the pull of modernism/Westernization: '[Western instruments] are our life right now. We are more modern than traditional. Modernism is taking over tradition which is why people are often looking for these modern instruments … The church does everything to obtain these instruments.' (2012, 1:14:11-1:14:39) MD1 added, in effect, that the new wineskin of Christianity needed new wine to fill it:

> I think that in the minds of many Christian nationals is that when they become believers they had heard a lot of these instruments, Western instruments. And I think there's something new, you know: 'Oh, this is different from our pagan practices.' Christianity itself is new to us. And so these new instruments may have a special meaning, you know. So, if we're going to be singing a Western tune, why not a Western instrument? (2014, 1:00:18-1:01:08)

Seven other Christians, while not rejecting Western instruments, expressed reservations about having so many foreign instruments in worship. According to them,

it makes the church seem alien to outsiders, and they would like to see more traditional instruments (Elders 2015, 11:59-15:00; MB2 2012, 9:11-10:08; HA2 2016, 53:55-55:23). IH said that when outsiders see traditional instruments in church, they say, 'Ah, so this is not just the religion of the white people?' (2014, 1:08:18-1:09:03) The problem may best be expressed in other terms: 'Certain instruments, such as the guitar, are global and not just associated with one culture. But indiscriminate adoption of this instrument forces the country to give up some of its individuality in rejecting those instruments unique to their cultures.' (Kidula 2008b:52)

5.3 Traditional Instruments

5.3.1 General Attitude towards Traditional Instruments in Worship

In principle, most Christians I interviewed had few objections to using the instruments mentioned in Chapter Five. All agreed that traditional instruments have their place in Christian worship. Many also believe that the value or power of any instrument is a quality assigned by people, not God, and is not binding on Christians (NY-A 2014, #I-A-7; DA 2014, #IV; MD2 2014, #I-O-2; Collinge 2010:16–17). HA2 stated that any instrument could be used in church if played to the glory of God (Women 2013, #II-E). A pastor added,

> Nothing is to be rejected. It's not the instrument that is bad, but the use we make of the instrument … If our young people, our musicians today, could refashion the *moolo* or the *gooje* to serve for praising and worshipping Christ, that would be awesome. (BK2 2013, 11:07-11:43)

One musician I interviewed said that 'Everything that is acceptable in society or gives people joy … is acceptable [in church].' (AB 2013, 16:00-16:41) The elders at EBCG believe that the church is in the best position to preserve and value traditional music. They stated that they do not want to forget their cultural roots (2014, 11:06-15:12).

In practice, however, Christians raised five main objections to some instruments:

1) An association with the spirit world. '[The instruments] that are not good are the ones played for the spirits' and for which one must offer a sacrifice (AS 2013, 33:08-34:48).

2) A bad testimony to outsiders. While believers have freedom to play any instrument, it might be such a barrier to non-Christians that it would be better to give up that freedom for the good of the other in keeping with Paul's principle of 'being all things to all people' (1Co. 9:19-23; 10:23-4) (NY-A 2014, #II-D; JM & MA 2012, 18:52-19:17).

3) An offence to new believers and seekers. Those who come directly out of the Songhai culture have strong associations with their past. Using these instruments might upset 'weak' Christians, reminding them of their past (see Ro. 14:19-21) (AM1 2013, 11:46-12:35). One musician stated that he would never use an instrument if he knew it would offend another believer (IH 2014, 9:53-10:19).

4) An inappropriate style of playing. Tunes or rhythms associated with spirit worship or sensual pleasures ought to be avoided. Trying to replicate music people used before they became Christians instead of seeking to honour God is equally unacceptable (JD 2012, 43:07-54:23; AM1 2013, 12:35-:13:34; BK2 2013, 6:43-7:16).

5) The context in which the instruments are used does not correspond to anything in church (HK 2013, 13:05-14:41).

Harold Best sums up the conflict many Songhai Christians feel using certain instruments:

> The difference between a system driven by paganism and one driven by Christianity does not consist primarily in rightness or wrongness of many of the things that pass away, but in the value or power assigned (or denied) to them by that system. (2003:176)

I will now examine the instruments introduced in Chapter Five and Christian attitudes toward their suitability for worship.

5.3.2 Instruments which Raised Few Objections

I heard no objections to any of the following instruments: the *bum-bum*, the *kasa-kasa*, the *seese*, the *gumbe 1*, and the *gaasu 2*. I have seen the *bum-bum* used only once in church and not during an official observation. It is used more often in Hausa churches (TB-B 2013, 16:29-16:56). I have already mentioned how commonly the *kasa-kasa* is played (see Section 5.1). As for the *seese*, I have never seen it in church, but few people know how to play it. The *gumbe 1* was used only in the AGK. As for the *gaasu 2*, I heard no one voice any concerns about it, and I have seen it used in one church, but not during an official observation.

The *gumbe 2* and the *dondon* raised some objections, but only from a few people. Only two men and the ladies group at the HCK questioned the use of the *gumbe 2*. HK objected that the context in which it is used would be difficult to adapt to church (2013, 8:52-9:28). AM1 said that the obscenities that often accompany it would make it unsuitable for church worship (2013, 7:11-8:25). It was not used in any of the churches I observed, but one of the churches had one (DeValve 2016c). Before I started this research, I saw that particular *gumbe* played, and I was able to interview the man who played it. He admitted that the instrument could have undesirable connotations but that when the rhythm was adapted to church music, the sound gave a colourful quality to singing, and the response of the congregation was enthusiastic (JD 2012, 48:58-49:56). GS also felt that one could adapt the *gumbe 2* for church worship (2012, 21:30-24:02).

As for the *dondon* (and its relative the *bitti*), I never saw it used during any of my observations or case studies, but the EBCG possessed a damaged *dondon* which had been used previously (Elders-A 2014, 10:15-11:06). Most people (26 individuals or groups) were positive about using it even though they know it plays a role in some possession-trance rites (HM4 2016, 2:50-3:06; Youth 2015, 6:47-6:54; PC-A 2010, #IV). The main objection to the *dondon* had to do with the style of playing and the

singing which accompanies it in Songhai culture (HM1 & AI1 2015, 39:09-40:03). The nine who voiced this objection gave qualified endorsement to the instrument: 'If it's for God, … it's not like what is in the world, then we would accept it.' (GI 2012, 25:02-25:11) BK1 stated that the playing of the *dondon* in church has to 'be different … from what's in the community. [The *dondonkari*] needs to bring songs that are different from others. It's the same thing with playing, too.' (2012, 30:05-30:35) Another man pointed out that that a *dondonkari* who wants to use his craft in church must alter his words so that they are offered in praise to God rather than to people (EK-A 2013, 10:27-11:26). Finally, another participant said Christians must always be sensitive to outsiders and preserve a good testimony when using this instrument (NY-A 2014, #I-A-7).

5.3.3 Instruments which Raised Some Objections

Two instruments fall in this category: the *kuntiji* and the *moolo*. Some of my research participants raised few, if any, objections to the *kuntiji* in church (EK-A 2013, 12:24-12:41; AB 2013, 27:14-27:23). TB, a musician, stated that

> The *kuntiji* is already part of [the tradition]. That means that it's an instrument we can … let anybody use. It's not – what do you say? – something sacred, like a sacred instrument we cannot … it's not for anybody … It can be exploited. (2013, 34:09-34:38)

Those who voiced objections to the *kuntiji* did so on the grounds that it could be used to call a spirit (AS 2013, 12:21-12:32) or that its use did not fit the context of the church (HK 2013, 10:33-10:52; JD 2012, 22:45-22:55).

The *moolo* was different from other instruments. While many had no objections to its use in church, most did object to the way it was used in the culture to praise people. HK voiced his concern thus:

> The moolo? Well, I don't know if it can be played in church, because, you know, when a *moolo* player comes to sit, we lay down a mat for him … He plays for someone and praises (*zamu*) him. Well, in church, I haven't … It's not possible. The *moolo* can't be played in church. (2013, 13:05-13:29)

When I probed a bit further to question why he objected so strongly to the *moolo*, he said, 'It's not that we can't use [it], no, but it's just that the contexts are different … It's

used to praise men who have accomplished great deeds.' (2013, 14:22-14:41) Many considered the use of the *moolo* a possibility but said that it would need to be greatly adapted (BK2 2013, 4:01-7:38; MD1 2014, 39:28-39:54; TB-B 2013, 38:07-38:48; GS 2012, 7:50-8:41). AB put it this way: 'Instead of playing it for this or that man, we could do it for the Lord who created him. So, it's him who merits it, not a man.' (2013, 31:20-32:15) Eleven groups and individuals, however, seemed to place few restrictions on the use of the *moolo* (Youth 2015, 7:11-7:31; Women 2013, #II-E; HM4 2016, 16:10-17:58).

5.3.4 Instruments which Raised Strong Objections

Of all the instruments mentioned in Chapter Five, the strongest objections to possible church use were raised against the *tuubal*, the *gooje*, and the *gaasu 1*. The *tuubal* is used in a completely different context from that of the church. It is never used by common people for ordinary celebrations or community events. HK told me it is played only for extraordinary purposes (2013, 24:58-25:36), mainly to announce rare, but important events (Youth 2015, 6:04-6:22; Women 2015, 9:35-10:12). Furthermore, it is made solely for the use of the chief and would be impossible to obtain unless someone knew how to fabricate it. No Christians I interviewed had any knowledge of how to make or play the instrument. Even more important, as HA2 said, the sound of the *tuubal* is not really considered music (2016, 26:59-27:09).

The two other instruments are associated with the *fooley*. Of the two, the *gooje* provoked the strongest reaction. Four groups or individuals accepted it unconditionally for church use, but they were all young people who are second-generation Christians (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 3:07-5:06; Youth 2015, 7:31-8:01). The rest of the research participants divided into two groups: those who would accept the *gooje* only on the condition that there was no obvious connection to the *fooley*, and those who adamantly opposed its use in church. The former group of eighteen individuals stated that the way

the *gooje* is played is important. They objected to it mainly because of its use in the *fooley* and said if it was used in church, the rhythms and melodies had to be noticeably different and used only to glorify God (MD2 2014, #I-O-2; BK1 & GA 2012, 56:06-57:14; AM1 2013, 6:21-6:47). Typical were the sentiments of BK2, who stated that 'the music that is played on the *moolo* or the *gooje* must change. Instead of praising *Dongo, Harakoy* [the deity of the Niger River], or other deities, it must be oriented toward the Creator God.' (2013, 6:50-7:20) By far the majority of 58 individuals (including the case study focus groups) were reluctant to accept the *gooje* in church on any terms. They objected to it, first, because the fabrication of the *gooje* requires a sacrifice, as I related in the second vignette. Second, its use in the *fooley* precludes its use in church. Third, participants feared that it would harm the testimony of Christians to use it (Choir 2012, #VI; MS1 2010, #IV; JM & MA 2012, 15:25-16:18; Waridel 1994:22; Men 2012, #V). Typical of this group were the sentiments of MB1, who put the matter this way:

> MB1: One could use all these instruments. It's the *moolo*[4] that bothers me the most.
> John: Why does the *moolo* bother you?
> MB1: Because, as soon as the *moolo* is played, I always think of the spirits, that someone is calling the spirits. But also, not necessarily for myself, but for the testimony that is given around us. (2012, 25:16-25:44)

The *gaasu 1* also garnered a lot of criticism. Five people saw it as worse than the *gooje* (HA1 2014, 9:33-10:54; Elders 2015, 34:04-34:50), but most categorized it as on par with the *gooje*, and a large majority of 48 Christian individuals (including focus groups) rejected it as being unacceptable for church (GI 2012, 10:52-11:20; EK-A 2013, 11:54-12:24; AS 2013, 9:24-9:36). The main reasons given were the same as for the *gooje*. MB2's comments were typical: 'It can't be used. Because if we use it here, people will say, 'Look, they're doing the *fooley foori.'* (2012, 24:52-25:03) Only eleven

[4] MB1 uses the word *moolo* here, but it is clear from the rest of the interview that he uses the word *moolo* to describe any type of stringed instrument. Later in the interview, I clarified what he meant by *moolo.* He made a distinction between the *moolo* plucked with the fingers (what I have called the *moolo*) and the *moolo* played with a bow (what I have called the *gooje*). For him, the former is acceptable in church. The latter is not (2012, 25:44-27:23).

participants were willing to accept it in church with modifications (GV 2016, 10:49-11:26; CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 7:05-7:39; GS 2012, 4:22-5:33).

6. Musicians in the Songhai Church

When I started this research, I knew only two Zarma Christians with proven song-creation capabilities. I assumed that the number of Songhai/Zarma Christians who could compose music was very small. I was mistaken. During my research, I interviewed or met no less than a dozen who are capable of and/or interested in creating worship music (AB 2013; TB-B 2013; HA2 2016; GS 2012, 52:00-52:33; Women 2013, #III-B; HM4 2016). Others can play musical instruments and sing. The reality, however, is that many talented musicians compose in French in a Western style using guitars, keyboards, and the drum kit. Many Christians have not learned to play traditional instruments or use traditional styles (IH 2014, 1:14:33-1:18:44; HK 2013, 53:37-55:17; MD2 2014, #I-O; DA 2014, #I-B). Furthermore, traditional instruments are not popular with young people, who see them as outmoded or discredited by the culture (AZ 2015, 27:23-28:07; Elders 2015, 32:19-34:04).

Looking at the matter from a different angle, church musicians face fewer restrictions than those in the Songhai culture. This is probably because the Christian church is more egalitarian than the rest of society. There is no constraint on musicians because of social status or birth. Anyone with talent and a temperate lifestyle can compose, play, or sing (BK2 2013, 54:45-56:04; Elders 2015, 1:00:32-1:03:25; Men 2012, #VIII). Song leaders in the churches I observed were both male and female. A mixed gender choir led singing in two churches. The other twenty-one churches had a total of twenty-five song leaders. Of these, eight (about one-third) were female. All of the female leaders were in Pentecostal churches (DeValve 2016b:1). The one area where the church seems to follow the cultural norms is in the gender of instrumentalists (Titon 2001:64; Durán 2006:220–21; Baker 2012:80). When women played

instruments, it was almost always an idiophone. Of the 27 idiophones used, women played two-thirds of them (18). Men played almost all the membranophones (32 out of 35) and all the stringed instruments (nine) (DeValve 2016b:2). The segregation of instruments by gender is probably not intentional, however, as indicated by two participants. It is undoubtedly because the cultural norms still cast their shadow over the church (JM & MA 2012, 30:19-30:54; GI 2012, 19:07-19:27).

When it comes to traditional musicians, most of my research participants agreed that there would be few problems if they as new Christians brought their songs and instruments into church as long as they used their music to glorify to God (GS 2012, 8:41-9:33; BK1 & GA 2012, 28:00-30:35). PA, one of the elders at the EBCG put it this way: The *jesere*

> who used to praise people, saying this person's grandfather did this … can change to using God's Word because now he has words to praise the Lord's name and use his profession to praise the Lord. He can change. But he should not give up his profession. If he has become a follower of Jesus Christ, we should not prevent him. We shouldn't say to him, 'You must give up your profession. You should not practise your *jesere* trade anymore.' No. You can be a *jesere* in God's name and praise the Lord and worship him. (2014, 37:57-39:09)

There are two problems with this scenario. The first is that I have not met any traditional Songhai musicians who are Christian. Eight research participants stated that they did not know any, either (MS1 2010, #VI; BK1 & GA 2012, 27:20-27:41; GI 2012, 24:05-24:12; Elders 2015, 1:06:10-1:07:25; DA 2014, #I-B). The second problem is that disdainful attitudes toward traditional musicians in Songhai culture have found their way into the church. Many Christians would have difficulty accepting a traditional musician because of the connotations they bring with them (Elders 2015, 1:06:10-1:07:25; MB1 2012, 59:58-1:00:48; JM & MA 2012, 46:43-47:28). When I asked TB what the reaction would be if a *dondonkari* brought his instrument into church, he said:

> If he plays the *dondon*? Well, perhaps Christians who have understood redemption a little, they might not see him as a slave. Perhaps, I say. But often, when one sees such a thing, one already knows that in the tradition, it's the slaves that play it. (2013, 21:08-21:24)

He added that he personally does not object to traditional musicians and traditional music in church, but that it is the responsibility of Christians to explain why freeborn people should have no inhibitions singing or playing instruments to honour the King of kings (2013, 24:41-26:22; DA 2014, #V-D).

As I said in Chapter Five, Section 2.1 many Africans have deep cultural connections to music. They often feel no inhibitions to tapping a *jembe* or clapping a rhythm to accompany a song. Song and rhythm are a part of everyday life, and everyone is expected to have some competence in music. It is not surprising, then, that song and movement are such important parts of Songhai church worship. The participation of everyone in the liturgy of music is highly desirable. This is accomplished through singing, swaying, clapping, some forms of dancing, and giving voice to different groups of the congregation, as vignette #3 demonstrates. In this sense, the whole congregation is involved in creating music.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sketched an outline of the music-culture of the Songhai Protestant church in the early twenty-first century and analysed its constituent elements. The information in this chapter answers the questions, What is the Songhai church singing and why? and How does the music of the Songhai church compare with the traditional music-culture? The chapter constitutes the heart of the research into the question of borrowed worship music in the Songhai church. I have demonstrated, first, that there is a standard order of worship in the liturgy of music and the liturgy of the Word and that there are elements of worship common in many parts of Africa. Second, I have noted Christian ideas about worship and the role of music in worship. Third, I have shown that there are standard song genres and repertoires across denominations and that most tunes and texts come from outside the Songhai territory. I have further related how some Songhai link traditional musical genres to worship music genres. Finally, I have

described the use of modern and traditional instruments in Songhai churches and the musicians who play them. There are few traditional instruments and almost no song styles from the Songhai music-culture currently in use, and, while Christian musicians face fewer restrictions than in the traditional music-culture, they do generally follow the gender norms in the culture.

There are several questions remaining to be answered. Why do Christians continue to use almost exclusively foreign-origin songs and borrowed instruments for church worship when there are some excellent options and examples of music and instruments from their own culture? Why do the Songhai lag behind nearby African cultures in creating indigenous music for congregational church worship? Why is music with traditional roots marginalised in the Songhai church? As I have demonstrated in this and the previous chapter, the answers to these questions are complex, varied, and interrelated, involving five cultural factors and associated variables of identity and change. The next chapter will provide some reflections on the use of foreign songs using grid/group theory as a framework for analysis.

Chapter Seven: Cultures and Identities: Music in Songhai Churches through the Lens of Grid/Group Cultural Theory

1. Introduction

There are three key assumptions I have made in this thesis. Each is confirmed by the research data. First, every church (at least amongst the Songhai) needs some kind of worship music (Chapter Six, Section 3.3). Second, as the reactions to my pre-selected songs reveal (Chapter Six, Section 4.3), the music of a church needs to be intelligible in that church based on the traditions of its music-culture. In other words, the music of the church needs to be 'well anchored' in the culture (MD1 2014, 53:23-54:10). Third, music in the church needs to link up with the church universal both in time and in space, both historically and cross-culturally (Friesen 1991:84; Muchimba 2008:95; Walls 2007b:7–15, 30) (Chapter Three, Section 4.1.3). The problem is that, in the contemporary world, there are a multiplicity of cultures and identities that affect the choice of worship music in Songhai churches.

In this chapter, I argue that the five subcultures I identified in Chapter Four have a profound impact on the formation and growth of a Songhai Christian identity. The influence of these subcultures, in turn, affects the selection and use of music and song performance in the Songhai church. In my analysis of the phenomenon of borrowed worship songs, grid/group cultural theory serves as a frame for examining these subcultures and the identity issues coming out of them. The analysis provides important keys to unlock answers to my questions about musical choices in the Songhai Protestant Church. As part of the process of analysis, I am proposing a new model for Mary Douglas' typology and a new paradigm for the study, creation, and use of music, song, and dance in the church.

2. Grid/Group Theory and the Five Subcultures

Each of the five subcultures I have identified fits into one of the four types of social organization in the grid/group typology. One could plot them in the diagram under their dominant type of cultural bias as follows:

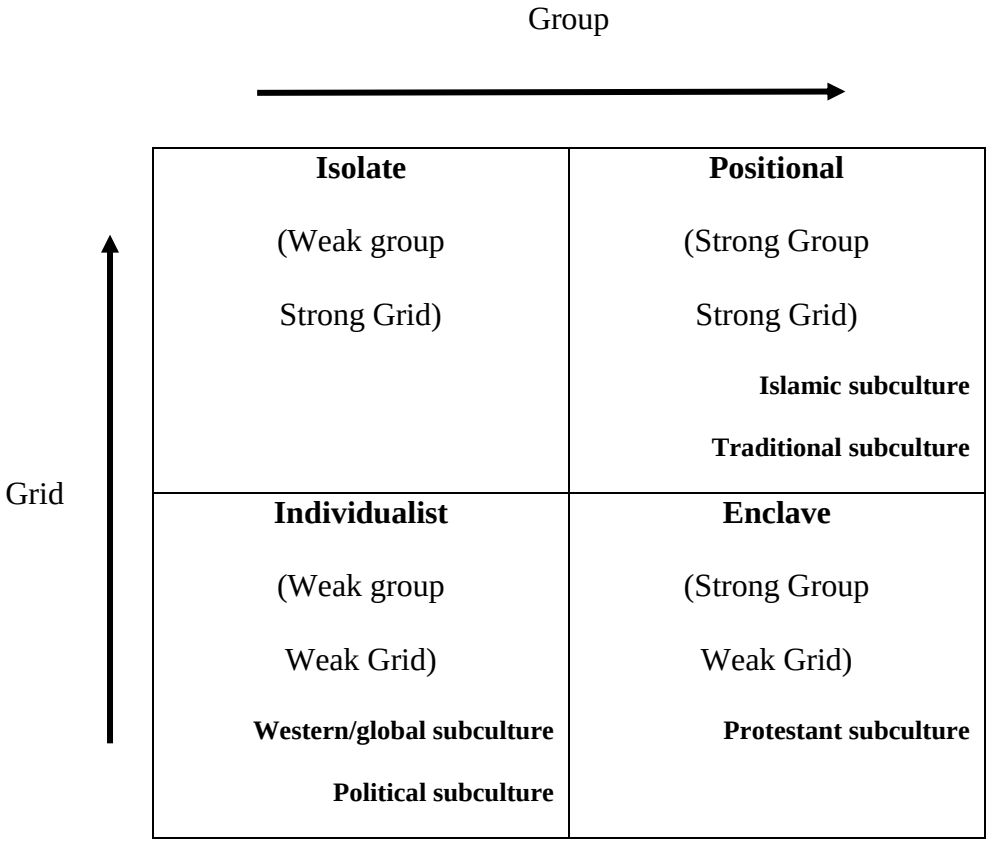


Table 7-1: The Grid/Group Typology Mapped to Five Songhai Subcultures

Strong group/strong grid – what Douglas calls positional – cultures are the first type. These are societies or communities which have a solid group identity. Roles are often ascribed and behaviour is governed by fairly rigid rules. Group commitments tend to be stable over long periods of time, and most people know their place in the community. These cultures tend to be more hierarchical (Douglas 2007:4), they have a regulated cosmology, and they are more ritualistic (Tovey 2004:35). African cultures like the traditional Songhai subculture and the Islamic subculture exhibit strong grid and group characteristics.

The traditional social structure of the Songhai with its classes of freeborn, slave, and artisan was never as rigid as many Europeans imagined (Frank 1995:135). Slaves

were usually former free-born people captured in warfare or raiding, and their descendants were sometimes granted freedom or obtained it by buying it or overthrowing their masters (HM3 & AI2 2016, 23:15-23:44). Furthermore, artisans had power over the freeborn through their crafts or their words, and many legends about the origins of the griots place their beginnings with noble families (Zemp 1966; Makarius 1969; Bornand 2004b:89–90). Nevertheless, the traditional culture fits more in the positional quadrant of strong group/strong grid because it is a bounded social system with externally imposed rules. Christian young people see it as hierarchical and rigid, preferring the new era (JD 2012, 1:14:03-1:14:39), in which they have freedom from their past. For them, there is little value in the traditions (CE, JE1, & JE2 2013, 26:22-26:39; Elders-A 2014, 11:56-13:12). Another part of the traditional culture involves Songhai religious beliefs. Connected to these beliefs are a cultus and a set of rites and rituals intended to communicate with the supernatural (Chapter Five, Section 3.1). These rites and rituals involve a patterned, culturally-bounded set of practices and regulations which are compatible with a strong group/strong grid cultural bias.

The Islamic subculture also fits into the positional quadrant of Douglas' schema. In Islam there is a powerful group cohesion and strong penalties for leaving the group. While in principle everyone is on equal footing (as evidenced by the common dress during the *hajj*), there is in fact an unwritten hierarchy of position, and people know their place in society (Bascom 2013:18–19). Islamic society is also highly structured, with many specific rules and regulations to guide individuals on their journey.

The second cultural type which relates to this research is weak group/weak grid, what Douglas classifies as 'individualist'. This type of society has little group identity and fewer regulations for engagement in the community. It tends to be dominated by competition and is a place where people can earn positions of influence. Group commitments are generally weak and dynamic. People are, in principle, on equal

footing although this type of community often fails to realise its ideals when wealth and power become the goal (Douglas 2007:6). The cosmology of the individualist community is ill-defined, and symbols do not necessarily mean the same thing to everyone (Tovey 2004:35). This description fits the dominant characteristics of many 'Western' cultures of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as well as the political/national culture of African states.

Most Western cultures can be plotted in the individualist quadrant of Douglas' diagram because, as a whole, these social systems require little group commitment and exhibit few external regulations except in contexts like the military or corporate structures. Individuals are free to choose with whom to associate and the social experience of individuals is 'unregulated by ascribed status classifications' (Moore 2004:91). In general, people have a wide scope for establishing and severing network connections (Caulkins 1999:111).

The political cultural of Niger, inherited from the French, also has many characteristics of weak group/weak grid. Nigeriens often identify less with the symbols of their national flag, national anthem, and national laws than they do with people who speak the same language and have a markedly similar culture. The four main ethnolinguistic groups of Niger (Hausa, Songhai/Zarma, Fulani, and Tuareg) are very different and come from different language families, making it even more difficult to build a national identity with a common history and loyalties. Clifford Geertz talks about how modern nation-states attempt to construct an identity out of diverse peoples. They try to define a whole new 'we' while looking both backward and forward. In the process, images of self-identity from traditional culture are challenged by a more general, vaguer concept of a national identity (1973:239–45; Stokes 1994b:10–13).

The third cultural type with connections to this research is strong group/weak grid. This type of community has few rankings or graded rules but features a strongly

bonded group. It rejects the inequalities of the outside world and seeks to bring people together on a more equal basis. Douglas refers to it as an 'enclave' community (2007:5). This cultural type values both personal freedom and social solidarity (Bascom 2013:18). I have placed the Songhai Protestant church subculture into this category because it is more egalitarian, stressing group solidarity but despising social differentiation. It is concerned about the moral purity of the group and often ends up demonizing outsiders (Caulkins 1999:111; Wildavsky 1991:357). The Protestant church subculture is also a tiny minority in Niger, Mali, and northern Benin. Songhai Christians in these countries are marginalised and belittled, often feeling threatened and repudiated. Their minority status shapes their identity, fostering a climate of isolation and leading to a rejection of the cultural and political norms of the society at large. Christians are on the margins, in a semi-permanent liminal state between two hierarchical subcultures (the traditional and Islamic) and two individualist ones (the political and global/Western) (Hirsch 2006:220–22, 283; Turner 1969:112, 156; JD 2012, 1:04:44-1:05:54). It leans toward one but is rooted in the other. Douglas says that enclave communities like these tend to be less stable and viable (Bascom 2013:19). Because of this instability, the church is uncertain of its identity and role in the local community and the worldwide church.

These five different subcultures overlap and intertwine, making it hard to distinguish between them. Each subculture is a key in identity formation. The voices coming from these subcultures compete for the attention of Christians, and the attitudes emanating from them may prevent Christians from practising their faith in ways the surrounding society can understand (Muchimba 2008:2, 58–9). Believers are trying to find their identity in the cacophony of voices. Not all the voices have equal status for them, but all of them speaking together lead to confusion and either a loss of identity or a fluid identity. In the next section, I will examine the musics of each of these subcultures and analyse how four of them view the traditional music-culture.

3. The Five Subcultures, Traditional Music, and Church Music

In traditional Songhai society, music and culture were intertwined and restricted. Music was bounded and intimately connected to events and to people. Christians have had little contact with this music. They were locked out of it either by a hierarchical system (*jesere* music) or by conviction (*fooley* music). Add to this the fact that music and worship do not even go together in Songhai traditional culture (HK 2013, 46:54-47:22) and the result is that few Christian musicians can play traditional instruments or compose songs in a traditional style. AM1 stated that Songhai/Zarma *jesere* music is far more restricted by 'caste' than the music of the neighbouring Hausa or Gurmancé communities. Churches amongst these latter communities have consequently developed more of their own worship songs (2013, 44:24-46:02). Christian young people find the traditional music-culture, with its attachment to the old Songhai class structure, stifling and passé. One young Christian leader told me that when he listens to traditional music, his peers tell him he is living in the time of his grand-parents and that their music is outdated (AZ 2015, 6:17-7:14). Nevertheless, believers cannot completely escape the impact of the traditional music-culture. For one thing, people still enjoy listening to traditional music, saying it helps them connect to their identity (TB-B 2013, 56:28-57:00; EK-A 2013, 20:26-20:56; GS 2012, 50:10-50:26). Furthermore, as I have shown in Chapter Two, Section 3.2 and Chapter Six, Section 6, the idea that only a certain class of people should perform music lingers. Finally, Songhai/Zarma Christians use their own language in everyday conversation while most Songhai churches use French as their primary language of communication.

As for *fooley* music, Christians reject it and the instruments associated with it as pagan and evil. As I have shown in Chapter Six, Section 5.3.4, most would be hard pressed to accept the *gooje* and the *gaasu* and the sounds of the *fooley* in church. As I have further shown (Chapter Six, Section 4.4), Christians do seek interaction with the

divine through their worship and music, and some have identified songs as a means to 'usher in the presence of the Holy Spirit'. Nevertheless, many feel it would contaminate them and give them a bad reputation if they used instruments or styles from *fooley* music in worship (Chapter Six, Section 5.3).

In many ways, music in the Islamic subculture is more restricted than the traditional one. All music is proscribed from the mosque, and traditional music comes under much criticism and pressure from Islamic sources (SK 2015, 16:59-17:53; NY-A 2014, #I-A-7). One *jesere* told me he is not teaching his children his trade because Islamic teachers oppose it and no one can make a living from it any more (GZ 2013, #V). In another interview, several Muslims said that traditional musicians are 'infidels' who 'do not follow the path [of Islam]' (IO 2016, #III-C-2). One pastor added that, under the condemnation of Islam, there are now villages in which all music is forbidden (HK 2013, 47:22-48:59). Over my time in Niger, I have noticed a gradual drying up of traditional musical forms. The *dondonkarey* used to attend naming ceremonies when my family first moved to Téra. Now, people tell me there are no longer any *dondonkarey* in the area (IO 2016, #II-B; HB 2015, 14:57-15:46). The same thing is happening in Zarma areas (MT 2013, 19:01-19:08). No wonder, then, that *jesere*-style music is dying out or that young people do not want to take up the mantle of their musician forebears. Christians I interviewed say that Islamic culture has no influence on the church's music. They point out that in recent years Muslims in West Africa have begun to use music more, not only in Sufi ceremonies, but also on radio and television (HM4 2016, 5:12-6:06; AZ 2015, 1:16:49-1:17:38; Elders-A 2014, 16:05-17:38; Anderson 2006:137). I would argue, however, that Islamic teaching and criticism of musicians has an indirect effect on how Christians view traditional music (Elders 2015, 52:13-52:35). Even though Islamic culture may not have a direct influence on what Christians sing or play, it has some impact on the kinds of music accepted or desired by people in the

community. This, in turn, makes Christians slow to consider using traditional music in church.

When it comes to liturgical music, orthodox Islam condemns it even more loudly and harshly (see Chapter Five, Section 3.1). It is not appropriate for Muslims because of its association with 'evil' (SH 2016, 28:09-28:56; HB 2015, 24:28-24:57; ZB 2013, 8:18-9:24). Christians also censure the practices of the traditional religion, but the question must be asked: Would they be less hesitant to use instruments and styles from the *fooley* if their reputation and status were not already at stake? It seems reasonable to conclude that the virtual dominance of Islam in the Sahel makes it harder for Christians to contemplate adapting traditional liturgical styles of music for church worship. The church feels it would be a major offence and would harm its already low standing amongst Muslims (MB1 2012, 25:16-25:44).

By contrast, the Western/global/modern subculture is free of many restraints and is less hierarchical. Christian young people connect readily with the global youth culture they experience through the media, mobile phones, and the internet. They are highly influenced by fashions and trends in Western culture. The music coming out of this subculture is becoming the standard for Nigerien youth of the early twenty-first century. In addition, the Western/global/modern culture has had a profound impact on the Songhai church (see Chapter Two, Section 5.2). Foreign missionaries brought a Westernized Christianity and its accompanying musical repertoire to Niger (Nettl 1985:97; Jones 1976:8–10; Nketia 1974:14–15). The hymns these missionaries brought to the Songhai are now merging with a Western-dominated global standard of praise and worship songs. This music is drowning out traditional musical genres. The church has not only adopted these forms and melodies, but it has also wholeheartedly embraced them and generally sees them as the 'ideal' for worship music (MD1 2014, 1:00:05-

1:01:09; TB-A 2013, #X). All this has a far-reaching impact on the formation of a Protestant Songhai identity (JM & MA 2012, 22:45-23:08).

The Nigerien political/national subculture inherited from the French has fewer constraints than either the traditional or the Islamic subcultures. Nevertheless, this subculture places restrictions on music. I did not expect to discover that the political subculture has had such an effect on the Songhai church, but my research participants raised the idea. They pointed out how seldom the government has encouraged music appreciation or trained its children in the principles and practices of music (Elders 2015, #IV-B-11; AZ 2015, 1:28:34-1:29:32). While neighbouring countries have actively supported the arts, Niger has remained, at best, lukewarm in its devotion to the arts and culture. This state of affairs affects the number of young people who desire to take up the vocation of musician, especially in a country where most live at a subsistence level. Research participants emphasized how, under the influence of national and political priorities, ordinary people devalue music and see it as an evil thing (HA1 2014, 35:47-37:01; AB 2013, 18:31-21:26; TB-B 2013, 31:34-32:10). Since the church is part of Nigerien society, it has not escaped the influence of national and political agendas and culture.

The Protestant subculture, with its strong group attachment but loose regulation, brings a new genre of music into the arena. This music is a recent phenomenon which only began to have an influence in Niger in the 1960s (Garba 1992:150; BK2 2013, 37:36-38:47). The music of the Songhai church is often an eclectic mix of ready-made, pre-packaged forms which come from outside the region (Chapter Six, Section 4.2). It imitates standard Protestant fare coming from other churches. It has not pursued the use of traditional styles and performance with traditional instruments. There are many songs in French and some in Zarma, but almost all the tunes are borrowed, and most of the lyrics are translated.

It is clear that several cultures and ideologies are competing for attention amongst Songhai Christians. Believers are part of not just one culture or community, but of several. The church is a community with a fairly strong group culture but few defined or ordered regulations or ascribed roles. At the same time, believers have connections to and are influenced by both positional and individualist cultures. The cosmology of the Songhai church spans a range from fairly well structured to dualism and private interpretations. Symbols in the church generally have a uniform meaning, but the music of the church comes mostly out of a weak group/weak grid background. The church is poised uncomfortably between several dominant subcultures, defining itself mainly in opposition to them.

4. Music, Identity, Change, and *Communitas*

While the five subcultures I have identified have a profound impact on the identity of Christians and the selection of worship music, one also needs to take into account the changes occurring within these cultures and the community cohesion of the church. In this section, I will argue that these three issues – identity, change, and *communitas* – largely account for the phenomenon of borrowed worship music in Songhai churches.

4.1 Identity

'Identity has been identified as the vital issue in contemporary debates within the arena of global reconstruction of national and ethnic identity. The social movements in different countries are concerned with the reassertion of personal and cultural identities.' So says Anthony Packianathan from the context of India, where the 'people of the drum', known as Dalits, seek to rehabilitate a symbol (the drum), which has demeaning connotations in the larger society, and turn it into a positive symbol of power and liberation (2001:2–5, 37). Music is a powerful symbol and identity marker and is important in identity construction (Kidula 2013:2, 9). Along with language, it often serves to define the boundaries between people (Castle 1990:188; Baily 1994:48).

Martin Stokes argues that ‘music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them.’ (1994b:5) Bruno Nettl makes a similar point:

> The fact that most humans can no longer conveniently exhibit their cultural specialness by dress, social structure, material culture, or even by their location, language, or religion has given music an increased role as an emblem of ethnicity. Cultural units, nations, minorities, even age groups, social classes, education strata all identify themselves by adherence to particular repertoires and styles of music. As other means of identification become less effective, music is increasingly stressed. (1985:165)

It is probably true to say that people’s identities have always been fluid. Even in ancient times there were people of mixed race or social origin. Today, however, the five subcultural voices have created a complex centrifuge of dynamic and multiple identities never before seen in Niger (Corbitt 1998:13). What does this mean for Songhai people in the twenty-first century? Simply put, it means that they are often bi-or multi-cultural and that their musical identity may come from two or more sources. Felix Muchimba states that many Africans are bi-musical (2008:58–9). Martin Stokes adds that musical practices often display a profusion of identities and selves (1994b:4). Bruno Nettl further emphasizes that contemporary cultures may use two or more musical systems and that cultures may share musics but recognize one’s own as distinct (2005:19, 51, 208). In both the Songhai culture and church there is a mixing of identities and of musics. These identities cannot easily be separated, but they may also be mutually exclusive at times, with differing values and benefits. They are mixed but not always compatible. All this has important implications for Songhai traditional music and for worship music in the Protestant church.

4.2 Change

Two of the five subcultures described above, the Islamic and the traditional, have been present for centuries. The other three are relatively recent arrivals in West Africa. All five cultures, however, are in the process of rapid change. Moreover, they are all changing at different rates. Most of the changes have come about through the triple

influences of Westernization, globalization, and urbanization (Rynkiewich 2008:40), which I defined in Chapter Three, Section 3.4. Here, I will deal with their application to music in the Songhai context.

Since the dawn of the twentieth century, the musical powerhouses of North America and Europe have had a tremendous hegemonic effect on the musics of the rest of the world, often forcing changes or modifications in them (Nettl 1985:20; Corbitt 1998:8). Westernization has irrevocably changed Songhai music. Several examples will suffice to demonstrate this. First, young people tend to gravitate toward Western-style musics like rock 'n roll, hip hop, jazz, and reggae. While these genres have African roots, they have been restyled and repackaged in the United States or Europe and given a world stage. Nigerien young people are adopting these genres and abandoning traditional musics and instruments (JM & MA 2012, 43:51-44:43; CB 2012, 11:25-12:01; JD 2012, 1:14:51-1:15:27; Charry 2012). Second, fewer young people undergo traditional apprenticeships, where musical principles are passed from parents to children. Instead, they go to Western-style schools where there is little to no music education (AM1 2013, 24:01-24:24). Third, as I related in Chapter Six, Section 5.2, Christians in both rural and urban areas desire keyboards, electric guitars, and the drum kit in church (Elders-A 2014, 12:32-13:12; Choir 2012, #V; HA1 2014, 30:26-30:54). Fourth, Euro-American music has had a suffocating effect on the *jesere*. Traditional musicians were once attached to noble patrons from whom they derived their sustenance. With the abolition of the class system and the introduction of formal education, their patrons have lost much of their wealth and influence. A handful of *jesere* have found new sources of income and national outlets for their work (HK 2013, 55:21-55:48; JD 2012, 59:26-59:49), but most end up eking out a living through music, forced to supplement it through other means of employment. Some, seeing the possibility of gain in the music industry, have 'humbled themselves' to imitate the

jesere. These 'fake' *jesere* are despised and belittled because 'they don't do real work' (AS 2013, 21:13-22:00; EK-A 2013, 21:46-22:58).

Another change agent is globalization. While related to Westernization, it concerns more the world-wide influence of trade, telecommunications, and technology. Global trade has lowered the price of many commodities and made them easier to obtain. Musical instruments are widely available in many locations. The worldwide web has made access to different cultures and their musics easier to obtain, and technology has reduced recorded songs to a simple CD or mp3, which can be easily downloaded onto mobile phones, portable players, or computers. I will mention two ways globalization manifests itself amongst the Songhai. One is the borrowing of instruments from neighbouring ethnolinguistic groups. An example is the *jembe*, which has been adopted as a key rhythm instrument in many Songhai churches (Chapter Six, Section 5.1). It has no association with the traditional Songhai religion, and it has few negative connotations. *Tradi-moderne* fusion bands are another way globalization has affected music in the Sahel (DeValve 2013a; Impey 2000:127). As I showed in Chapter Five, Section 5.5, their music is modern in the sense that they employ instruments like keyboards, guitars, and drum kits and use sound systems to amplify the music on stages. The music is then disseminated through recordings. Their music is traditional in that they incorporate traditional instruments, song styles, and themes which are compatible with traditional Songhai genres. They retain a traditional character (JM & MA 2012, 44:43-45:29; JD 2012, 1:19:17-1:21:06; YM 2016, 20:10-21:31; DeValve 2013a, #III).

Urbanization and its related movement, industrialization, is the third force for change. People in cities live in close proximity to those from distant cultures, not only geographically, but also artistically (Nettl 1985:21, 77–8, 162–3). They tend to be more cosmopolitan, projecting multiple identities and speaking several languages. They may also enjoy the musics of two or more cultures (Nettl 2005:50; Rynkiewich 2008:38). As

different people in cities interact with each other, there is a cross-pollination of ideas and lifestyles. Examples of urbanization's effects on music abound in Niger. I will cite two. One is that people in cities have access to electricity, technology, and formal education, and these, in turn, give them access to the internet and a better understanding of the outside world (JM & MA 2012, 22:45-23:08; MD1 2014, 55:22-56:23). As a result, people accept and listen to a variety of musics and rub shoulders with people of many nations and cultures. The dissemination of musics through the media, cell phones, and the internet brings the world to the ears and eyes of people cheaply and rapidly. In a place like Niger, this happens most often in cities, where infrastructure and opportunities are more readily accessed. A second example is something I have already mentioned (Chapter Four, section 4.2.2): the composition of most 'Songhai' churches. Since these churches are largely in urban areas, they tend to be multicultural. In Niamey, for instance, none of the fifteen churches I surveyed had a majority of Songhai members, and only one came close. Only two of the eight churches I surveyed outside the capital had a majority Songhai membership. The importance of this fact is shown in song languages. Since there are so many ethnolinguistic groups represented in the churches, the common language is French, and most of the songs are in French. This, in turn, reduces the need and desire for songs in a local language and more traditional style (BK2 2013, 51:53-53:47; Elders-A 2014, 27:27-28:57; IH 2014, 1:23:28-1:23:56).

4.3 *Communitas*

The Protestant church amongst the Songhai has received a tradition and a set of symbols from outside the limits of its temporal space. This is not something unusual or strange. Every Christian community throughout the world has a received a set of traditions and symbols. These form part of the identity of the Christian church, a worldwide community of diverse peoples and languages. C Michael Hawn argues that the church needs to embrace this multi-cultural, multi-lingual identity. He says the church needs to

revisit the prevailing concept of community as a small social unit that is self-sufficient, homogeneous, and conscious of its distinctives (2007:213–6).

The Songhai church is a community that recognizes its connection to the worldwide church and embraces diversity. The problem is that in identifying with this worldwide community, the Songhai church has neglected or ignored its local community and context. It faces outward but not inward. In embracing a larger community, it has largely failed to create *communitas*. Alan Hirsch defines *communitas* as the compulsion to find each other in the shared experience of ordeal, humbling, transition, and marginalisation (2006:220). Another way of expressing this is that the Songhai church has leaned quite heavily toward the tendency Walls calls the 'pilgrim' principle, the idea that God calls people to move beyond their culture and ways of doing things and identify with Christians of other times and places (2007b:8–9). As a relatively powerless minority, they have latched on to a source of power coming from the outside. As one research participant put it, 'It is as though the message is the envelope … and we want to keep the envelope because it came like that. We don't want to detach ourselves from it.' (TB-B 2013, 1:01:22-1:01:42, my translation)

At the same time, Songhai Christians are part of a community and society with received traditions and religions. They are still connected to a past and surrounded by a powerful majority, bound by the limitations of geography, language, and history. Wanting to cast off the bonds of old traditions, they lean toward modern 'traditions' coming from the West and the nation/state created by colonial powers. They are in a liminal position with respect to both the West and their traditional culture, poised precariously in an enclave community which they are not fully responsible for creating. The church has veered away from one tradition and rushed toward another. It has not fully realised the power of the 'indigenizing' principle, making the church at home in

the Songhai culture (Walls 2007b:7–8; AM1 2013, 13:21-14:11; 26:33-27:22; BK2 2013, 1:03-3:09).

5. Cultures, Identities, and Cultural Theory

5.1 Hybridity

The five subcultures and three change agents mentioned above, along with a limited sense of *communitas*, have contributed to a crisis of identity for many Songhai Christians (AB 2013, 20:34-21:57; TB-B 2013, 53:45-57:45). Since music is often a key identity marker, it goes without saying that Songhai people and churches often have several competing identities, some more prominent than others (Kidula 2008a:101–103; Bediako 1992:4–5). Homi Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity' is apt here. The term describes the state of marginalised people who survive under domination and seek to integrate distinct aspects of their culture into new formulations which arise out of the clash of cultures (2004; Clarke 1999:127; Agawu 2003:xviii). Many people in the contemporary world have several different, competing, and overlapping identities. They may hold to several belief systems which coexist and even conflict with each other (Gittins 1989:13). This concept helps understand the position and direction of many Songhai churches and Christians with respect to music. There are many different voices speaking to them, and they identify with most of them but do not fully embrace any of them.

Since many Songhai identify with more than one type of music, many of them are often multi-musical. As largely town and city dwellers, they tend to have multiple musical inputs from various streams of world musics. So it is not just a question of one heart music, but of several heart musics coming from the multiple identities that make up their psyche. Identity formation in this pot of competing subcultures is both slow and dynamic, and the musics that people feel 'at home' with are not necessarily compatible or equally meaningful.

5.2 Identities

With all these cultures and their various ways of dealing with group and regulation vying for their attention, my premise is that Christians are struggling to find their identity, especially their musical identity. To support this position, here are a few citations from my interviews. First, three people, a woman, a pastor, and a musician, stated that the Zarma and Songhai have not yet 'found their own rhythm' (HA1 2014, 33:26-35:36; IH 2014, 1:09:03-1:10:54; AY 2014, 1:06:03-1:06:40). Another added that the Zarma are 'beginning to discover their own identity', but that they are only in the early stages of finding it (MD1 2014, 42:29-44:50). One pastor stated that the church must work hard to make people feel at home, in harmony with the context (AM1 2013, 13:38-14:09). A musician affirmed that, for him, identity means the capacity to know and be oneself. When people have this capacity, they are able to contribute something to 'the concert of nations'. According to him, no such identity exists for Songhai Christians, and they do not know what contribution they can make to the church in the area of worship music (TB-B 2013, 57:45-58:22). One group of men I interviewed in a village stated that since Niger does not value music nearly as much as neighbouring countries, it has not developed its own musical identity. The church, according to these men, follows the political culture and does not have a music of its own (Elders 2015, #IV-B-11). This corroborates what the Nigerien ethnomusicologist Mahaman Garba says in his monumental thesis on Hausa music. Unlike Mali, Senegal, and Guinea, Niger has not 'counted music amongst a program of national priorities'. On the contrary, he said, 'music is the object of unfavourable social prejudice.' (1992:13, my translation) As an outsider-insider, I argue that this attitude exerts an inhibitive influence on the church. Always in a constant posture of defending its music before the onslaught of puritanical Islam or before the traditional mind-set about the use and

function of music in society, it feels unable to step out on its own. One Christian research participant stated that

> If someone sees you, a noble [playing music] … you are seen badly. Even in … society itself, if … people have heard that you have been involved in that, if you return to your family, they will speak badly of you. They [say] to you … speak to you in a manner that will make you angry deep down inside. Because I myself, I was a victim of that. (MS4 in Elders 2015, 52:47-54:12)

By contrast, the church looks to the West for musical inspiration and performance standards and puts more of a global stamp on its music than a local one. Thus, the church struggles to find its musical identity between a society that still has a fairly rigid classification system and a society which has a more individualistic outlook.

5.3 Change and Cultural Theory

One aspect of culture that grid/group theory does not address well is change over time. Mary Douglas and others have responded to this critique in a variety of ways (Douglas 2007:62–3; Wildavsky 1991:358). Douglas, in the introduction to the 1996 edition of *Natural Symbols*, says:

> The model needs to be able to organize a rich store of information, be flexible, and dynamic, so capable of incorporating change. This was my objective in setting up a two-dimensional diagram of cultural bias. On one dimension is variation in constraints on the individual imposed by group membership. On the other the constraints of structure are assessed – that is, rules, classifications, compartments. (2003:xix)

The problem is that Douglas' typology is fairly circumscribed and bounded. Even she admits that the model is static (Douglas 1999:412). She insists that there is plenty of room for modifying and mixing of the types, but aside from stating that all four social types may be present in any one community, she does not specify how four, supposedly incompatible types of social control can mix or be modified. Furthermore, she does not show how her model reflects change. The two-dimensional diagram she has offered may help conceptualize where a society or community is at a given point in time, but it is difficult to graph the diachronic movement of that community as its mechanisms of group commitment and social control change.

Another problem with the theory and the diagram is that it does not account for a context like that of the Songhai church, where several subcultures with differing agendas and worldviews from different ends of the typology compete with each other in the formation of a cultural sub-identity. Some of the subcultures influencing Songhai Christian identity live in uneasy tension with each other. Furthermore, Douglas' scheme does not have a mechanism for dealing with competing identities in a single community. The church has both a local and a global identity, and these are in tension. The reality in the Songhai church – which I suspect is true for other contemporary subcultures – is that the situation is far more complex than the neatly-drawn lines of Douglas' two-dimensional, flat diagram.

5.4 A New Model

While Douglas' theory is a simple, powerful analytic and interpretive tool to study culture and its manifestations, there are limitations to the model she created. Its two-dimensional nature makes it unable to account for change and the complexities I find in the Songhai context. While it helps visualize the concept of cultural bias, it conceals ways that individuals and communities may exhibit cultural bias in different ways in various situations (Lingenfelter 1998:38–50). These realities have led me to search for a new model for grid/group theory which will take into account the cultural complexity and fluidity of the Songhai context. I propose adding a further dimension to make the theory more flexible and applicable to the situation in the Songhai Christian community. It is my belief that this will extend and strengthen grid/group cultural theory. While it is difficult to find a model which would accommodate a third dimension, a close parallel is the model of the DNA molecule used in the biological and chemical sciences.

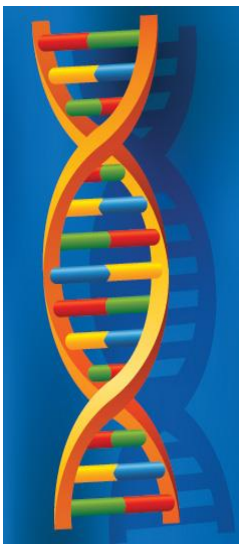


Figure 7-1:
DNA Molecule
(Courtesy: *Cinco Resources, Inc.*)

The most common model for DNA is that of a double helix with four chemical bases (see figure 7-1) (Cinco Resources, Inc., n.d.). The four bases are a code or map for each human being's fundamental structure and physical characteristics. The double helix backbone anchors the bases and allows them to connect in various combinations of pairs. I will use this model as an analogy to describe cultural influences in identity formation.

There are several reasons this model seems appropriate. For one thing, DNA is the basis for our appearance and identity as individuals. It determines such things as ethnicity, gender, and family. Likewise, the various cultural influences and change agents in the lives of Songhai believers help determine their cultural and spiritual identity and shape. Second, the DNA model is complex and three-dimensional. It is able to take into account the notions of hybridity and the mixing of identities. A similar model for cultural theory would take into account the complexity and diversity of cultural formation and identity. Third, DNA accounts for changes in the body through reproduction, mutation, gene therapy, ageing, disease, life circumstances, and invasion by foreign bodies. It is not static but dynamic. An adaptation of the model may be applied to culture and the church community. Change in culture often comes about through various external and internal stimuli, and Christians often talk about the church reproducing itself. Fourth, DNA is a model that explains dominant and recessive characteristics in people. In a similar fashion, a cultural DNA model helps explain dominant and recessive historical and cultural influences in the formation of a Songhai Christian identity. Further, as the double helix, the backbone of the DNA model, remains the same, so too the community of believers worldwide has many characteristics in common that set it apart from other world communities. Finally, the DNA model is not contained in borders and boxes. A similar cultural model is less rigid and makes room for more 'mixing and modifying', as Douglas puts it (2007:3).

Using a cultural DNA model as my starting point, I would see the double helix foundation as representing the Songhai Protestant community. The five subcultural influences on the Songhai would then form the bases in their cultural DNA. These five cultural influences replace the four bases in the biological DNA model and each fit into one of the four types in Douglas' theory. They can be combined in various ways to define the makeup of each church community and each individual Christian. The forces for change at work in the church may then be represented by the ideas of Westernization, globalization, and urbanization (as well as other factors). There are some limitations to this model, of course. Bodily characteristics of a person are usually thought to be determined at conception, but the characteristics of Songhai churches are still in the process of formation even though the church has already been born. It is also a complex model which is difficult to map to the church. I do not claim the model is perfect, but it is a starting point for discussion and thought. It helps visualize and conceptualize the position and direction of many Songhai churches and Christians.

How would this model work in practice? There are several ways to apply it. I would first meet with pastors and musician colleagues to discuss each of the subcultural influences in turn. We could look at the positive and negative aspects each one has on music and musical identity in the church. Looking at the traditional subculture, for example, we could note the compatibility of the different song genres with church music and the popularity of heroic story-telling. We could acknowledge the distaste for the modern expression of the *jesere* and the disapproval most Christians feel for the *gooje* in worship. We could then note changes occurring in traditional music, such as its fast decline and the mixing of traditional and modern. We would further ask questions like, What does the prevailing view of the *jesere* have on our views of how we choose music and accompaniment? To what extent is traditional music important to us? and What kinds of traditional music could we incorporate into our churches now? A second

application strategy would be to analyse the worship and music on a given Sunday morning service and determine the origins and importance of each element of the service: song genres, song tunes, repertoires, instruments, church space, preaching, and so on. Taking these two steps would give an understanding of the various factors influencing the formation of a Songhai Christian identity. Third, we could describe each music-culture and its ideas about music, instruments, song tunes & styles, musicians, and activities associated with music. We would then analyse each aspect and its possible application to the Songhai church. The next section will deal with a fourth application of the theory.

6. Musical Praxis in the Songhai Church: Word and Sound

Many of my Songhai Christian participants mentioned two key elements in any communal worship: word and sound. These two elements govern the nature of their preferred worship experiences and musical preferences. As I mentioned in Chapter Six, Sections 3.5 and 4.2, words are one of the most important concerns for Christians in the choice of church music. While the entire worship event is important and all the senses are involved in worship, Christians put a special stress on hearing. Twenty individuals or groups in this research made doctrinal or ideological statements about words which show how strongly they feel about them. For example, one participant made the comment that 'the Zarma love words, beautiful words. Well-crafted words are what interest them.' (HK 2013, 1:06:21-1:06:48) When asked whether the music or the words of songs were more pleasing to her, HM1 immediately responded, 'The words that it [the song] says.' (2015, 34:17-34:46) She went on to qualify her statement by saying that both music and words are pleasing, but it is the words that make a song meaningful. MB1 said that he pays attention to the words, which to him are more important than the melody or the sound of the instruments (2012, 4:03-5:05). AZ added that singing is essential in church 'because the words that are used are used for God, to praise God, to

worship God … That is why we should weigh the words.' (2015, 1:15:50-1:16:27) When I asked the women at the HCK why the words of songs were so important, one stated,

> Because it's … through these words that we really see the greatness of God, and we learn about God. The words that are brought out, they really help us to see who Jesus is. It's … not the melody. The melody says nothing to us, but the words which come out … that is what is essential. (HA3 in Women 2015, 11:31-12:09)

This point was reiterated many times by other research participants (Elders 2015, 5:29-6:09; MB2 2012, 1:20:35-1:22:12).

While words are important, without a particular type of sound, song would be little more than normal speech (IH 2014, 39:02-40:16; GV 2016, 42:00-42:29; Youth 2015, 11:05-12:03). Worship music is more than speech. It is a type of communication that speaks on several levels: cultural, semiotic, and emotional, to mention only a few (Chatfield 2016). Sound wedded to text communicates much more deeply than pure language. In addition, the way music communicates is also much different than language. Music calls to people, motivates them, creates a particular mood, or sets a context. It is impossible to ignore sound as a key component of song.

In Chapter Three, Section 3.1.3, I mentioned John Blacking's two-fold description of music: humanly organized sound and soundly organized humanity. Humanly organized sound emphasizes that music is a product of human behaviour and ideas. No other species can organize sound the way humans can. While each culture has its own way to define 'music', every known culture has some kind of special sound organized by members of the community (Blacking 1973:10; Soanes & Stevenson 2010). Soundly organized humanity looks at music a different way, suggesting that it is a part of cultural process and 'expresses aspects of the experience of individuals in society' (Blacking 1973:89). It has to do with how people relate to and communicate with each other. Music, then, while created by individuals, is a shared experience that is both influenced by and influences society.

Taking my cue from Blacking, I submit that Songhai churches have two complementary ways of looking at worship: soundly ordered words and words soundly ordered. Soundly ordered words involve right belief, or orthodoxy. Believers and churches amongst the Songhai want sound theology in the lyrics of their songs. If it is not in accordance with their interpretation of the Bible, they will not tolerate it in church (Elders 2015, 1:00:56-1:03:25). Because of the close association between song and language and the power associated with words, believers see soundly ordered words as one of the most important qualifications in the choice of worship songs. Many of the choruses and songs come directly from the Bible or contain biblical language or imagery. An example of this is the chorus entitled, 'Gloire à Dieu Qui Est dans les Cieux', which repeats the following two phrases over and over: 'Glory to God in the highest. Everyone sing Hallelu, Hallelujah'. The reader can listen to a version of the song, done in a call-and-response style, here http://bit.ly/2m5CGRk.

Words soundly ordered involve the appropriate use of sound, or a phonic orthopraxy. It includes both communal singing accompanied by music and messages spoken in a corporate church setting. It is how the church expresses its belief and theology. Song is central to worship for the Songhai, and, as my research has shown (Chapter Six, Section 3.3), most would say that some kind of musical accompaniment is an integral part of singing. It is a message encoded and embodied in sound, a sung sermon. For many, singing is almost more important than the sermon because it conveys a message in easily-memorisable, attractive ways that link emotion, mind, and body (MD1 2014, 30:47-32:14; Elders 2015, 1:09:47-1:15:29). Not only that, but sound makes connections with attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the world. Don Saliers says that 'spirituality has to do with sounding life before God', and that music helps people make sense of the temporality of their existence in the transcendent elements of time (2007:6–9). Roberta King states that music helps people process life (2008b:120).

It helps shape and express one's theology in ways that are concrete and less abstract. In addition, songs reenergize and renew the believer's commitment to God and to fellow human beings. Not only does theology shape song, but song shapes theology. It expresses belief, but it also becomes belief. Songs communicate theological meaning, but they also interpret Scripture (Saliers 2007:35). All the more reason for Songhai believers to test the songs they sing to assure they are in accordance with the principle of soundly ordered words.

These two related ideas, soundly ordered words and words soundly ordered, which I propose to bring together under a single term, the 'logophonic' principle, are important organizing concepts in the liturgical theology of many Songhai churches. The 'logophonic' principle, as I define it, is the bringing together of sound and word in such a way that both conform to Songhai Protestant notions of biblical principles and are judged by them as appropriate to worship in the context. In suggesting this organizing principle, I am not attempting to lay aside the adiaphoric or regulative principles. Rather, I am saying that these two latter principles do not mean much to Songhai believers in their context. In the Songhai church, all aspects of worship are centred on sounds and words. Both are important, and this contrasts with many churches in Europe or North America, where the Word is often seen as primary (DD 2016, 6:18-8:42). While Christians do struggle to find the right balance between sounds and words, they see both elements as essential to meaningful worship.

What does the 'logophonic' principle have to do with Mary Douglas' grid/group theory? I propose two applications. First, following the concept of words soundly ordered, believers need to look at the available sounds, genres, instruments, ideas and styles which originate in the five subcultures and influence their musical choices. Together, they can decide which of these elements are useful and appropriate in the context and how best to integrate them into worship. This is part of their cultural DNA

and Songhai identity. Second, using the idea of soundly ordered words, they can examine the theology and nature of their song lyrics and determine what is important to them as believers and what makes up their spiritual DNA and Christian identity. Then they can craft and use song lyrics in accord with their convictions and practice. In the next section, I will present some concrete ideas about how to do this.

Mark Hatcher suggests three ways poetry and singing can aid the church in its life and worship. First, they can present theology in understandable ways. Second, they can express Christian meaning in ways that correspond to people's experience. Third, they can help interpret the reality of the cultural world using religious symbols and the experience which Victor Turner calls *communitas* (2001:475).

7. Paradigm Shift, or A Modest Proposal

Charles van Engen defines a paradigm as a 'pattern of thought used to perceive reality and order that perception in an understandable, explainable, and somewhat predictable pattern'. It is a tool for observing, understanding, or explaining reality as one sees it, an epistemological perspective that examines our complete view of reality (Van Engen 2008:xv). In this section I will propose a modest paradigm shift for Songhai Christians. Specifically, I wish to bring together the loose ends of the preceding discussion and present steps the Songhai church could take to deepen and broaden its worship practices. This proposal serves as a template for continued theological and practical thinking and discussion about worship and music. As J Nathan Corbitt says, 'Making worship meaningful requires thoughtful change based on biblical principles.' (1998:78) Or, as GS put it, the Songhai need to find songs that respond better to their current realities and needs (2012, 54:47-55:13). There are two questions to answer. The first is to determine what worship music practices best fit the complexities and ambiguity of the current age in the Songhai context. The second is to decide how I as an outsider-

insider can continue to learn about and speak into the current context. In the following paragraphs, I speak as a participant in the process of applying this new paradigm.

First, I propose that church leaders, musicians, and interested believers get together to examine the five cultural influences in our belief and practice and how they are changing under the powerful forces of Westernization, globalization, and urbanization. This would include a study of the music-cultures associated with each of the five subcultures mentioned. Questions that might be asked include: What is our cultural and spiritual DNA and how is it changing? How does the Protestant community's outward-looking focus help or hinder the worship and proclamation of the church? What are the influences that are shaping the church's identity and how do Songhai churches and believers 'find our own rhythm', our contribution to the worldwide church, in the area of worship? What musics and instruments are most helpful for us in expressing our Songhai and Christian identities?

Second, I suggest that we – Songhai believers and churches – use the 'logophonic' principle to evaluate our worship theology and praxis. This principle has some resemblance to the indigenizing and pilgrim principles. The Word comes to us from outside, with symbols and elements that are foreign to our culture (the pilgrim principle). The Word is then expressed in various mediums in worship, but it is particularly useful and meaningful when articulated through music, a medium that speaks powerfully in our context (the indigenizing principle). The goal, then, in crafting music for the Songhai church is two-fold. On the one hand, sounds and words need to be intelligible and pleasing to participants, something that appeals to our Songhai identity (the indigenizing principle) (Hunt 1987:136–8). On the other hand, the words and sounds need to take us beyond our culture and understanding of the Bible, connect us to the church worldwide, and inform our Christian identity (the pilgrim principle). In short, our music needs to be faithful to both culture and gospel.

The first half of the 'logophonic' principle is the concept of soundly ordered words. Churches and members should take a hard look at songs used in church to see if they conform to the principle of 'orthodox' belief and if they express the full range of biblical theology. Together we should further think about appropriate imagery and ideas in crafting song lyrics (Muchimba 2008:103–104). We could, for instance, use appropriate images from the natural world, from Old Testament narratives, or from Christological themes in the New Testament (Balisky 1993:451–3). I would further work with Christian musicians to study our faith deeply. Just as the *jesere* need to know their audience and their histories, we Christian musicians need to know the theology and history of the Bible thoroughly and have a deep connection with our congregations so we can communicate the message faithfully in music (NG-C 2016; MD1 2014, 36:54-37:25). Finally, I suggest that we revisit the liturgy of the Table. Communion should not be an afterthought or something that is secondary to the worship service. It should be an integral and essential part of it and a well-planned event with music appropriate to the context.

Once we have evaluated song lyrics under the lens of soundly ordered words, we could then explore new ways of attaching appropriate sounds to words, using the principle of words soundly ordered. We must discern our cultural DNA and spiritual heritage and find an identity that allows us to contribute our unique insights and practices in music and worship to the global church (Schreiter 1984:269). We should seek to match ideas and sounds that will appeal to a broad range of people both inside and outside the Christian community. I would work with Songhai musicians in the church and in the culture to experiment with styles of music and instruments that come out of the traditional culture. We could mix traditional instruments with modern ones. We would not reject what we have already received (instruments like the *jembe*), but we would investigate ways to learn and transmit sounds and words that speak to people

within the Songhai culture. In short, we would seek to embrace the context in ways appropriate to the contemporary world. In particular, I would try to introduce some of the less controversial instruments into worship, particularly the *dondon* and possibly the *moolo* or the *kuntiji*, along with more indigenous styles of song such as call and response, accented trochaic syllables, and pentatonic scales (Muchimba 2008:104–106). During the research, for example, two people informed me that it is possible to incorporate a *moolo* into Christian settings and that people tune their ears attentively to a message accompanied by a *moolo* (AY 2014, 33:48-36:05; HA2 2016, 22:34-22:59).

I would also suggest several other changes in applying the principles of words soundly ordered. The first would be to take Scripture passages and set them to music. Many churches on the subcontinent have used this technique as a way to take suitable text and craft appropriate melodies around it (Baker 2012). The second is to create two kinds of songs. The first kind would be songs that are more lyrical and active, which express the subjective side of Christian experience. The second kind are songs that are more historical and systematic, expressing the theological and objective side of Christian faith (Corbitt 1998:176, 208). Of course, not all songs fit neatly into either category, with many containing elements of both, but the point is to intentionally craft songs that cover the range of Christian belief and experience. A third possibility is to put music and song into the context of the entire church liturgy just as an ethnomusicologist studies music in the context of the entire culture (DD 2016, 6:18-8:42). The liturgy of music and the liturgy of the Word need to have some correlation.

The changes I have suggested will take some thought and humility on the part of all of us, church leaders and musicians. Some churches are ready to incorporate changes like these into worship, and some musicians are interested in these initiatives. A few have even been doing them, but their efforts are not widely known. In short, all of us, musicians, leaders, and church members connected to the Songhai need to think through

the factors that have influenced our choices of music and consider the pressures that change has brought to musical choices. With good work in the areas of both sound and word, we should be able to craft music that would have unprecedented power in communicating the Word in our cultural context (Collinge 2010:20).

Second, I would try to create music patterned after the four main musical genres I have identified in the Songhai culture: celebration and praise music, liturgical music for communication with the supernatural, advice and exhortation, and *jesere* music which chronicles great deeds of the ancestors. These genres correspond closely with the four aspects of church musical practice which Don Saliers has identified as giving a pattern to sung theology:

1. Praise and thanksgiving
2. Petitionary prayer
3. Proclamation
4. Narration of God's mighty acts (2007:34).

I would work with Songhai believers to explore these aspects of worship more fully and to develop songs within these genres that fit the contours of worship and of our cultural expressions. In this way, we can express the full range of biblical theology in music and song. As we think about how to enhance worship, we would be guided by the 'logophonic' principle. This would help channel our theological and artistic thinking about song-creation and would be another step down the road toward an emerging Songhai Christian identity.

There are at least four ways to create new songs, and I would suggest that the Songhai church employ them all. First, we can take an existing song from a foreign source and translate it or modify the words, using the same tune. Up to this point, the church has largely relied on songs like this in its liturgy. Since we have used this method so often, however, I would recommend that we concentrate on using other

techniques for creating worship music. The second method would be to write new lyrics for existing tunes. Several participants mentioned doing this (PA in Elders-A 2014, 21:52-24:54), but I do not recall hearing any of these songs being used in worship settings. A third way to create new songs would be to write a new tune for an existing text. I witnessed this kind of music during church observations. One Sunday at the AGK, a group of Chadians got up to sing a song from the traditional French hymnal, *Chants de Victoire* (*Songs of Victory*). Since I knew the words, I expected to hear a familiar tune. Instead, what I heard was a tune composed by a Chadian that fit the French words and obviously meant a lot to those who were singing it (DeValve 2014d). I concur with the observation my colleague, Ben Hegeman, made when he visited Chad: '[The Chadian] singing was amazing; better than anything I've heard in Benin and Niger.' (2014) Here is a link to that song: http://bit.ly/2mPRweq. It is entitled, 'Entends-Tu? Jésus T'Appelle' ('Do You Hear? Jesus Is Calling You'). One day at the EBCG, the ladies' choir also sang a song out of the hymnal. The tune was not the Western one suggested in the appendix, but a tune written by HA2 (DeValve 2013c). So this method of song creation is being tried, but it needs more experimentation and use (DA 2014, #IV). A final way of creating songs would be to compose a completely new song with new lyrics and a new tune. This may be the hardest for Songhai Christians to do, but it should be attempted, nevertheless. As far as I know, only one congregational song has been created using this technique: *Wa Naanay* (TB-B 2013, 1:05:05-1:05:27). Although late in the research I discovered another song (*Nda Ni Ga Ba Irikoy* – 'If You Want God') that has been composed by a Zarma woman for worship, it does not yet have wide circulation in Niger churches (AZ 2015, 1:14:37-1:15:11; El Shaddai 2014).

A few miscellaneous suggestions came from the people I interviewed. One is that group composition might make the task of song creation easier. In a society and community where people place high value on group, some people said they find it hard

to create music on their own (Women 2013, #IV-C). Another suggestion is to bring musicians from several different churches together for the purpose of reflection on worship, training, and crafting new songs and song styles (Elders-A 2014, 31:34-33:19; AY 2014, 1:22:48-1:23:21). A third suggestion is to intentionally create more original songs in Songhai. While multi-cultural churches in urban centres need songs in French and other languages, there are far too few songs in Songhai (TB-B 2013, 54:22-55:47; IH 2014, 45:45-47:15). Finally, one could copy the model of the *tradi-moderne* musicians and adapt it for worship. Churches can bring together modern and traditional styles, instruments, and genres, creating new musical forms and preserving traditional music in the process (JD 2012, 49:39-50:44; JM & MA 2012, 43:51-45:46; McLaughlin 1997:560, 565–6). The director of the CFPM in Niamey informed me that *tradi-moderne* music is in a position to save traditional music from extinction, and the church is also in a good place to be an avenue of preserving traditional music through the use of this style (MG-B 2013, #V & #VI).

A final suggestion I have is a call to the Alliance of Evangelical Missions and Churches of Niger, known by its French acronym AMEEN, to create a forum for Christian musicians, church leaders, and interested believers to think about, create, and disseminate worship music in both local languages and in French. This forum could also serve as a think tank on worship practices and principles which is devoted to reflection, research, composition, recording, performing, and teaching of songs for the whole church. Local churches or church groups may also want to set up their own group of worship specialists. Up to this point, church leadership in Niger has not affirmed the importance of the role of Christian musicians and the critical thinking needed to stimulate ideas about worship and music. A clear support of such a forum and material aid in such an endeavour would give churches and church musicians the legitimacy and validation they need to carry through with more music creation (IH 2014, 1:15:04-

1:16:02; AY 2014, 1:23:43-1:24:05). It would also give the church a very forward-looking agenda and help create excitement and foster creativity in the area of worship and music.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the phenomenon of borrowed worship music using grid/group cultural theory as a frame for analysis. I have posited that Songhai Christians suffer from a loss of identity or a confusion of identities under the onslaught of five different cultural biases and the numerous changes that have affected community life since 1900. Group identity arises from and is reinforced by such factors as language, geography, history, ethnicity, and culture. It is closely related to the notion of place as well as one's ontological and epistemological posture (Geertz 1973:35). Most Protestant Songhai in Niger do not have a clear understanding of their identity as both Christians and Songhai. The music they sing reflects the ambiguity of their identity. They have adopted a form and style of music that marks them as different from others in their society. They stand apart from their community, looking to the outside for inspiration and nourishment. While they have many songs in Zarma, the words they sing are usually translated and have a borrowed tune. The songs may reflect the musical genres of the Songhai music-culture, but the instruments they use to accompany songs are mostly foreign in origin. They look at sounds and, especially, words to express and shape their Christian belief and practice, but they have few ways to express their Songhai identity and roots. Furthermore, few musicians know the traditional music-culture or have tried to compose new lyrics or melodies in a traditional style.

To analyse the phenomenon of borrowed worship music, I have reconceptualised grid/group cultural theory using a new model for the theory which fits the Songhai context. I have further identified a 'logophonic' principle which Songhai believers can use to organize their worship. I have also presented concrete steps whereby we as a

church can proceed to reflect on and renew our worship practices. What remains in this thesis is to summarize the key findings of the research and propose some avenues for further study proceeding out of the research.

I need to make one final comment, and here I speak as an outsider. During this research, I have had several informal conversations with research participants who desire to see more indigenous worship music for church. I have emphasized to them that they must take the lead in creating this music, using as many of the resources at their disposal as possible. Past attempts to create appropriate indigenous music have shown that it is not advisable for outsiders to take the lead in this endeavour. I fear that if I am the initiator and director of any such project, it will be viewed as one more foreign intervention in Songhai affairs. My role can be that of a catalyst, bringing people and resources together and creating a spark that sets off a reaction of viable song creation. If I take on any other role than that of support and advice, however, the project will fail as have the previous ones.

Chapter Eight: Summary of Key Findings & Avenues for Further Research

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will summarize the most important findings of this research. There are four main findings relating to the Songhai traditional music-culture, four relating to the Protestant music-culture, and four findings with general significance arising from the research project as a whole. After recapitulating the discoveries I have made, I will conclude with some suggestions for further research.

2. Songhai Traditional Music-Culture

2.1 Music as Celebration and Fun

One of the main findings related to the traditional music-culture is that Songhai people associate music with celebration and happiness. As my data shows (Chapter Five, Section 2.1), this is a key element of the Songhai music-culture and one of the prominent ideas in a Songhai perception of music. The only genre that does not fall under the category of celebration is liturgical music. Additionally, there is no music at funerals or times of lament. There are several reasons why this finding is significant. First, this posture distinguishes the Songhai from some neighbouring African peoples and cultures. While all the cultures have music for celebrations, song and dance at funeral rites and times of lament is also important in many West African cultures (Hendershott 2009; Baker 2012:80). Amongst the Songhai, music of lament is a category foreign to both Christians and non-Christians. Second, for the Songhai people as a whole, worship is not a time of celebration, so aside from specific rhythms and melodies associated with spirits, music is not considered a part of worship. In fact, in my experience with the Songhai and in my research, I discovered that many Songhai see music in a light-hearted way as though it were something for fun only and not for

'sacred' use (DeValve 2005, #II & #IV; JD 2012, 1:09:40-1:11:00; BK2 2013, 1:03-3:09; GI 2012, 4:23-4:52). For new Songhai Christians, it is difficult to adopt music for worship. Third, as I have shown in Chapter Six, Section 4.4, it is easy to transfer the genre of festive music to the church because the Christian faith is about celebrating God's actions and words. Celebration is part of a Christian sense of identity.

2.2 Four Genres

Another key finding of this research is the discovery of four main musical genres amongst the Songhai (Chapter Five, Section 3). These four genres are liturgical music, *jesere* music, festive music, and hortatory music. Each genre has its own sub-genres and variations, and they overlap in both form and function. Several miscellaneous other genres exist that do not fall under the four main categories. As I said in the previous section, all the genres except the liturgical one have some kind of celebratory purpose. Certain instruments, dance styles, and melodies are associated with each genre. In addition, *tradi-moderne* music is a separate genre that fuses traditional styles and instruments with electronic instruments and melodies, disseminating the resulting mix through concerts and modern media (Chapter Five, Section 5.5). As I have further demonstrated in Chapter Six, Section 4.4, Christians have appropriated all four of the main musical genres into church worship.

2.3 Thirteen Instruments

In the course of this research, I have identified thirteen traditional instruments in the traditional Songhai music-culture that are in current use (Chapter Five, Section 4). Some, like the *kuntiji* and the two *gumbes*, are adaptations of traditional principles using modern materials, but all of them are undergoing changes as they encounter the contemporary world. Seven instruments are specialized according to their role or the class of people who play them while six are not so specialized. These thirteen instruments support various functions, including the expression of emotion, the

communication of important messages, and the validation of social norms and religious rites.

2.4 Classification

Systems of classification depend on cultural bias and perception. One of my key findings in this research is that the Songhai do not classify musical instruments so much as musicians and musical events (Chapter Five, Section 5.1). This is not unique to Africa, but it turns Western systems of classification on their heads. Of the thirteen instruments identified, for instance, five would be considered membranophones under the Hornbostel/Sachs classification system (the *dondon*, the *tuubal*, the *bitti*, and the two *gumbes*). Four would be considered idiophones (the two *gaasus*, the *bum-bum*, and the *kasa-kasa*), three chordophones (the *gooje*, the *moolo*, and the *kuntiji*), and one an aerophone (the *seese*). I have not classed them using the Hornbostel/Sachs taxonomy but have opted to use a more local system of classification based on types of performance and performer. The gender of performers also relates to the system of classification. Following the practice common in other parts of Africa, men generally play membranophones, chordophones, and aerophones, while members of either sex may play idiophones. Singers may be either male or female (Baker 2012:55) (Chapter Five, Section 5.4).

3. Songhai Protestant Music-Culture

3.1 Worship Structure

A first important finding about the Songhai Protestant music-culture is that in church services there is a definite order of worship centred around two elements: a liturgy of music and a liturgy of the Word (Chapter Six, Section 2.1). This finding may not be considered unusual, but at its heart lie three important concepts. First, while Protestant churches do practice the liturgy of the Table, they do not place great emphasis on it. This is a weakness in the worship structure. Second, the two main elements of worship

do not always have a strong connection. The songs do not necessarily complement the message, and vice versa. Instead, songs often seem to be chosen randomly or according to their popularity. Third, there is a great emphasis on words in both parts of the service.

3.2 Preponderance of Borrowed Tunes and Translated Lyrics

Before I began this research, I suspected that the repertoire of songs used in the Songhai Protestant church was largely of foreign origin. This research has confirmed that initial impression and shown that almost all the song tunes in church are borrowed from the West or other African churches. In addition, worship songs in Zarma are predominantly translated versions of French or English songs (Chapter Six, Sections 4.1 and 4.2). This finding lays a foundation for the entire research project and is the source of my main research question: Why do Songhai Christians use mainly borrowed songs in worship?

3.3 Interest in Traditional Music

Another significant research finding is the noticeable interest in and openness to using traditional forms of music and instruments in church. In all forty interviews with Christian individuals and groups, believers endorsed the use of songs in Songhai. Only in eight interviews did the participants see little role for traditional music in the church. As I noted in Chapter Six, Section 2.2, the majority of individual Christians gave partial or unqualified endorsement to traditional styles and instruments. Furthermore, as the experiment with pre-selected songs showed (Chapter Six, Section 4.3), Songhai people do appreciate songs with a traditional style but also a contemporary feel.

3.4 Many Songhai Christian Musicians

One surprising finding of this research is the discovery of at least dozen a Christian Songhai who are competent musicians (Chapter Six, Section 6). Given the small numbers of Christians amongst the Songhai, this fact alone was startling and unexpected. Furthermore, six of these musicians are interested in using traditional styles and instruments in church worship, and all of them gave unqualified endorsement to

traditional music in church (TB-B 2013; IH 2014; DA 2014; HA2 2016; DD 2016; HM4 2016). A few have even composed and performed pieces for a church- or community-based setting. They are a decided minority, however, and, with one or two exceptions, their songs have not become widely known or used (TB-B 2013, 1:05:06-1:05:20; HA2 2016, 48:53-49:56; AZ 2015, 1:14:37-1:15:11). Outside of their own churches, they are not well known, and they have few connections with each other.

4. Main Findings

4.1 Marginalisation of Traditional Music in Church

There is a discernible marginalisation of traditional music in the Songhai Protestant church. This is the first major finding of this research. It follows a trend visible in the traditional music-culture, where Songhai genres like liturgical music, praise-singing, and the telling of epics are being relegated to a second-tier status by the headlong rush to embrace modern musics and by criticism from Islam and Christianity. Instruments like the *moolo* and the *dondon* are used less and less. The main settings for traditional music in the twenty-first century are festive events, the courts of chiefs, *tradi-moderne* bands, the *fooley foori*, and television and radio. The Songhai church has not embraced its traditional music, a posture that has accompanied an alienation from the society at large, a facing outward but not inward (Chapter Six, Sections 4.2 and 5.3). The church has swung toward emphasizing its 'pilgrim' identity and not so much its 'indigenous' identity. Since there are so many multi-cultural and multi-lingual churches in urban settings, this is probably not surprising, but it inhibits the church from practising its faith in easily understandable ways (Muchimba 2008:2).

4.2 Little Use of Traditional Instruments or Song Styles in Church

A second major finding of this research is the lack of traditional musical instruments and song styles in church settings (Chapter Six, Sections 5.1 & 5.2). Aside from the *kasa-kasa*, I observed few traditional instruments from the Songhai music-culture in use

in churches (Chapter Six, Section 5.1). The *jembe* and home-made tambourines were common, but these instruments have only appeared in Niger during the latter half of the twentieth century. There was a *moolo* in one church, but a Gurmancé man played it. In another church, I saw a *gumbe 1*, but again it was played by a Gurmancé. Not only were few traditional instruments in evidence, but the song styles were decidedly foreign, with typical hymns or choruses adopted from the praise and worship movement in the West. Except in two churches, most songs were in French, used a heptatonic scale, and borrowed a Western tune.

4.3 Importance of Lyrics in Worship Songs

One of the most important findings of this research is a decided emphasis on song lyrics. This comes out clearly in both the Songhai traditional music-culture and in the Songhai church. In the culture, people love well-crafted words intoned by a *jesere* or a *sorko* (Chapter Five, Sections 2.1 and 2.2; Chapter Six, Section 3.5; and Chapter Seven, Section 6). In the church, words form an essential component of the liturgy of music. Wedded to sound, the words have particular power and meaning to Songhai believers, but the words must conform to their interpretation of orthodox belief. In this sense, they are as important as the melody to which they are set. In this research, I have identified a 'logophonic' principle which guides believers in their worship. It is composed of two parts: soundly ordered words, or words informed by an orthodox belief, and words soundly ordered, or a phonic orthopraxy. The emphasis in both parts of the worship is on words. The first, the liturgy of music, involves enhanced or embodied words that come in a multi-sensory package (song). The other, the liturgy of the Word, is a hortatory word that is projected through one sense only (hearing). Each complements the other, but both are important.

4.4 Christian and Songhai Identities, Multiple Heart Musics

The most important finding of this research is the conflict between identities that Songhai people, and especially Songhai Christians, feel. They are precariously poised between their Christian and their Songhai identities. What is more, five cultural and historical factors (Chapter Four, Section 6) contribute to their identity formation and growth. These cultural factors and the changes occurring in each of them have contributed to a confusion or profusion of identities. Christians have a plethora of voices speaking to them and a variety of musical choices. Each subculture has a different approach to cultural bias. Group commitment and regulation (as defined by Mary Douglas in her cultural theory) vary with each subculture. The musics of each one follow the cultural biases inherent in them. Because the cosmology and group commitment of each subculture is so different, the musics of each come with their own built-in assumptions and practices. The Songhai church, constrained by these different voices and ideas, is seeking an identity, an identity that will propel it into the modern world and give it a voice in the worldwide church, but also an identity that will root it in the soil of West Africa. For the time being, the church has taken the easy way out and bowed to pressure to conform to a certain standard of worship music coming from outside the continent. Using a new model for grid/group cultural theory which fits the complexities of the context and also extends cultural theory, I have proposed a new way to analyse Songhai Protestant worship music. I have further proposed a new paradigm for examining worship practices in the Songhai church and renewing the liturgy of music.

5. Suggestions for Further Research

In any doctoral study, the focus is quite narrow. I have concentrated mainly on discovering the music-culture of the Songhai people and church and examining the worship practices of the Songhai church. There are many related areas of research that

could have productive results or lead to interesting conclusions. I will mention a few of them here:

1. A study of the musicological side of the Songhai music-culture, with an analysis of the musical style and a collection of as many traditional songs as possible.

2. A study of song texts and how they reflect culture and worldview. A study of song texts in the church could investigate the kind of theological thinking revealed in the words and what kinds of theology are lacking in songs. A study of texts in the Songhai music-culture would reveal more insights into cultural themes.

3. A study of women and music amongst the Songhai. Because of my gender and role in Niger, I have been limited in accessing the female population amongst the Songhai.

4. A similar study centred on youth. I have incorporated as many younger people in this research as possible (twelve interviews with individuals and groups under 30), but considering that the majority of Niger's population consists of young people, it would be good to get a feel for their interests and ideas in order to better interpret future trends in the church and culture.

5. A comparison study of the Songhai music-culture and that of neighbouring cultures in the Sahel. Any comparisons I have made in this study are cursory at best. Such a study would help scholars and practitioners understand how these cultures are distinct and how they have interacted with each other.

6. An action research study which would attempt to work with Songhai believers to create worship music for Songhai churches.

7. An exploration of the ways and roles of music communication amongst Songhai people, both Christians and non-Christians.

8. A study or studies of worship in various contexts and communities using grid/group cultural theory as a frame for research and analysis.

9. More studies which use grid/group cultural theory to analyse and interpret the music-cultures of West Africa and the interactions between cultures.

6. Postlude

In this thesis, I have examined the traditional music-culture of the Songhai and looked at the phenomenon of borrowed worship music in the Songhai church. I have proposed a way of analysing this phenomenon using a new model for grid/group cultural theory. Additionally, I have suggested a 'logophonic' principle to guide musicians, church leaders, and believers in their research, analysis, and application of the theory to praxis within the church. The next question is, Where do we go from here? In collaboration with the Songhai church, I propose that we first examine our worship practices based on soundly ordered words and 'find our rhythm' and melody in words soundly ordered. I also suggest that we seek to discover and use all the resources at our disposal to create and disseminate worship music. I would encourage creativity in composing music that relates to the context, music that helps people understand God and the world better and brings us into a real experience of *communitas*. It is my desire that, using these principles, we believers will move forward together with confidence into the future, having a clearer idea of who we are and how we can contribute to the worldwide church. As Walls puts it, 'It is a delightful paradox that the more Christ is translated into the various thought forms and life systems which form our various national identities, the richer all of us will be in our common Christian identity' (2007b:54).

APPENDICES

Appendix One: Worship Survey Form

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Date: _____

Name of Church: _____

Place: _____

Church Construction: _____

Pastor/Leader: _____

Time of Service: Start: _____ Finish: _____

Arrival Time: _____

Composition of Congregation: _____

Congregation divided into men's and women's sections? Y/N

Approximate number of people present:

Men: _____ Women: _____ Children: _____

Non-Africans: _____

Language(s) of worship: _____

Electricity in the congregation? Y/N Fans? Y/N

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Music team:

1. Leader/Cantor

   a. Instrument played, if any: _____

   b. Sex: _____

   c. Name: _____

2. Instruments

	Instrument	Sex	Name	Ethnic Group
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Singers/Choir

a. Number of people in choir:

b. Dancing? Y/N

c. Swaying? Y/N

4. Congregational singing:

a. Use of power point? Y/N

b. Use of songbook? Y/N

If so, title of book:

c. Elements included in song sets:

Prayer: Y/N

Scripture Reading: Y/N

Dancing: Y/N

Comments:

SONGS

1. Congregational songs:

	Song Title	West?	Style/Tempo	Instruments	Lang.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					

2. Closing Song(s):

	Song Title	West?	Style/Tempo	Instruments	Lang.
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Group Songs:

A: Group 1:

	Song Title	West?	Style/Tempo	Instruments	Lang.
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Composition of the group:

Men/Women/Children:

Dancing? Y/N

Use of Book? Y/N

Preliminary song for marching to the front? Y/N What song?

B. Group 2

	Song Title	West?	Style/Tempo	Instruments	Lang.
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Composition of the group:

Men/Women/Children:

Dancing? Y/N

Use of Book? Y/N

Preliminary song for marching to the front? Y/N What song?

MESSAGE TEXT:

MESSAGE TITLE:

MESSENGER:

LANGUAGE OF MESSAGE:

Translation? Y/N What language(s)?:

ORDER OF SERVICE:

Appendix Two: Questionnaires

A. General Questionnaire for Semi-Structured Interviews

Date: _____

Name: _____

Name of Father (considered the last name in Niger): _____

Sex: M/F

Age: <20 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s >69

Urban/Rural: _____

Residence: _____

Profession/Work: _____

Family situation: Single/Married/Divorced/Widowed

Number of children: _____

Family origin: _____

Economic Status: _____

Education: _____

Ethnic origin: _____

Languages spoken: First: _____Others: _____

Dialect of Songhai: _____

For Christians:

Church home: _____

Denomination: _____

Number of people who attend the church: _____

Language(s) used in worship: _____

Role(s) in the church: _____

B. Questionnaire for Christians

1. Questions about musical instruments:

Name five traditional Zarma/Songhai musical instruments

Do you know the instrument _____?

When do people use this instrument?

Who plays the instrument?

Is the instrument associated with spiritual powers?

Is this instrument acceptable for use in church? Why or why not?

Is the instrument used amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Is there a generic word for musical instruments in Songhai/Zarma?

2. Questions to ask with a list of song occasions/genres:

On what occasions do people sing/play instruments amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Who sings on these occasions?

What instruments are used on these occasions, if any?

Would this style/genre of singing be acceptable for use in church?

What is the value of songs, stories, and great deeds of the past?

Do you know this tune/genre of music?

Is there a generic word for music in Songhai/Zarma?

Are there occasions where instruments play but no one sings?

3. Questions about musicians:

What does the musician do? What is his/her role?

Who can become a musician? In the culture? In the church?

How does one become a musician?

What is the reputation of the musician? Is he/she reliable? A good role model?

Are musicians important in society? Why or why not?

What is a *jesere*?

What is the difference between the *jesere*, the *nyamakala*, and the *ŋwaareyko?*

Do you like to listen to traditional music?

4. Questions about the music sung in church:

Name two favourite songs that you sing in your church.

Why do you like these songs? How have they helped you?

Is the repertoire of songs sung in your church large or small?

Do the songs meet the need of the church? Are they sufficient for the church?

Is music/singing essential to worship?

Why do Christians sing?

What is worship? Where does one worship?

What is the relationship between worship and music?

What is the role of music in the church?

What instruments are used in your church? Who plays them?

Do you like this instrument ____ in church? Do you prefer certain instruments?

What is the role of dance in the worship of the church?

Is there someone in your church who is composing music for the assembly?

Why are there not more Zarma/Songhai songs which use traditional forms of music?

C. Questionnaire for non-Christians

1. Questions about musical instruments:

Name five traditional Zarma/Songhai musical instruments

Do you know the instrument _____?

When do people use this instrument?

Who plays the instrument?

Is the instrument associated with spiritual powers?

Is the instrument used amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Is there a generic word for musical instruments in Songhai/Zarma?

What do you think of the guitar?

2. Questions to ask with a list of song occasions/genres:

On what occasions do people sing/play instruments amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Who sings on these occasions?

What instruments are used on these occasions, if any?

What is the value of songs, stories, and great deeds of the past?

Do you know this tune/genre of music?

Are there occasions where instruments play but no one sings?

3. Questions about musicians:

What does the musician do? What is his/her role?

Who can become a musician in the culture?

How does one become a musician?

What is the reputation of the musician? Is he/she reliable? A good role model?

Are musicians important in society? Why or why not?

What is a *jesere*?

What is the difference between the *jesere*, the *nyamakala*, and the *ŋwaareyko*?

Would you allow your daughter to marry a musician?

Do you like to listen to traditional music?

4. Questions about the music in general:

Is there a generic word for music in Songhai/Zarma?

Are songs and instrument acceptable at the mosque?

On what occasions do people dance?

Who dances on these occasions?

When is it permissible to dance with a member of the opposite sex?

Do you sing? Do you play a musical instrument?

Can anyone in the society sing and play musical instruments?

D. Questionnaire for Musicians

1. Questions about the musician's life:

How did you become a musician?

What do you do as a musician?

What training did you have to become a musician?

Was your father, mother, or another ancestor also a musician?

How do you see your role in society?

2. Questions about instruments:

What instruments are/were used amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Do you know the instrument _____?

When do people use this instrument?

Who plays the instrument?

Is the instrument associated with spiritual powers?

Is the instrument used amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Is there a generic word for musical instruments in Songhai/Zarma?

3. Questions about tunes, song genres, and song occasions:

What are some tunes, genres used amongst the Songhai/Zarma today?

On what occasions does one hear singing amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Do you know this tune/genre _____?

What is the origin of the tune/genre?

On what occasions is it used?

Who sings/plays it?

Is it used often or only a little?

Do musicians accompany the song with musical instruments?

What is the value of songs, stories, and great deeds of the past?

Are there occasions where instruments play but no one sings?

Are there occasions where people sing without instruments?

4. Questions about music and musicians in general:

Are there different kinds of musicians? How many? What are they?

How do non-musicians see you?

Is there a difference between men and women musicians?

How does one become a musician?

Is there a generic word for music in Songhai?

E. Questionnaire for Case Study focus groups:

1. Questions about musical instruments:

What are some traditional Zarma/Songhai musical instruments that you know about?

When do people use this instrument?

Who plays the instrument?

Is the instrument associated with spiritual powers?

Is this instrument acceptable for use in church? Why or why not?

Is the instrument used amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Do traditional instruments have a place in church?

Why are the instruments above _____ not used in church?

What instruments would you like to see in church that you do not already have?

What are the names of the instruments you use in church?

2. Questions about songs:

On what occasions do people sing/play instruments amongst the Songhai/Zarma?

Do you prefer songs in French, in Zarma, or in both languages?

What is more important to you, the words or the tune?

Why are so many of the song melodies and texts borrowed from other cultures?

What do Muslims say about Christian music?

On what occasions is Christian music used outside the church building?

3. Questions about musicians:

Who can be a church musician?

How many songs do you know that are composed by a Songhai or Zarma Christian?

Why are there so few congregational songs composed by Songhai or Zarma Christians?

Do you know someone from the *jesere* class who is a Christian?

Do you know how to play a traditional instrument?

4. Questions about the music sung in church:

Why do Christians sing?

What is worship? Where does one worship?

What is the role of music in the worship?

Is music/singing essential to worship?

5. Play three songs which represent three styles of music in two languages. The first is 'Abba Père' (French); The second is 'Voici le Jour' (French), and the last is 'Wa Naanay' (Zarma). Ask the following questions:

Do you like this song? Why or why not?

Do you understand the words? What does it say?

Is this style of music acceptable in church?

6. General Questions

Name and composition of the group:

Number of people in the group:

Age ranges in the group:

How many of you have at least one parent who is/was Songhai or Zarma?

How many of you had Christian parents?

Appendix Three: Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by John DeValve (Yaaye). He is currently a doctoral student at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in Oxford, England. John will analyse and possibly use what you tell him during this interview in his thesis project. Your stories, words, and ideas may appear in publicised form for people to read and study along with stories, words and ideas provided by other people.

The research is a study of music in the Songhai/Zarma culture and its application to the community of believers. John hopes that the findings of this research will help people in other parts of the world to understand the Songhai/Zarma culture better and provide a platform for others to hear about the Songhai/Zarma people. He also desires to work with believers to explore their identity to the fullest, especially in the area of music.

Your identity for this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your name, residence, and any other sensitive information will be abbreviated so that what you contribute will appear as being from an anonymous source. The identity of anyone you mention in your interview will also be protected in the same way. John will keep all materials gathered in his research on his computer and backups, and only John, his wife, and his research assistants who agree to keep the name of participants confidential will listen to any of the recordings or see any of the transcripts.

John DeValve is therefore requesting permission to interview you and to use what you tell him during the interview for the purposes mentioned above. He will ask you a series of questions about music, and the interview will last about an hour. John will record your answers to the questions he asks. He would also like to request your permission to contact you at a later date if there is a need to clarify something you said in the interview.

Please note that your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any interview question or to withdraw at any point during the interview. If you withdraw, any information you have provided will be discarded. You are free to ask any questions you have before, during, or after the interview.

No compensation will be given for participation in the research, but you may request a copy of the findings at the end of this form.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. If you decide to participate, please sign the two copies of the form provided for you, indicating you have read, understood, and agreed to participate in this research. You may keep one form and return the other to the researcher.

JOHN R DEVALVE

B.P. 10056

8000 Niamey, NIGER

99.97.71.75

Statement of Informed Consent

I have read and understood the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate in it.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please send me a copy of the results

Name (print): _____

Address: _____

Appendix Four: Code Sheet

Codes for Interviews

A. Colours for codes (to the left of each code in list B is a number in parentheses corresponding to the following colour):

1. Yellow—To translate
2. Bright Green—Christian worship & music
3. Turquoise—Reasons for/against traditional music in church
4. Pink—Cultural postures toward music
5. Blue—*Hooley*
6. Red—Christian attitudes toward traditional music
7. Teal—Traditional instruments
8. Green—Cultural music characteristics
9. Violet—Traditional Songhai society
10. Dark Yellow—*Jesere*
11. Grey (25%)—Cultural Music Occasions
12. Dark Blue—Influence of Islam
13. Dark Red—Reasons for ambivalence to music
14. Bold—Commentary
15. Grey (50%)—Dancing
16. Black—Role of musicians today
17. Underline—Reflective Practice (Self), Power, Family, Body, Emotion
18. *Italics*—Time, Change, Space
19. Turquoise—Attributes of music
20. Blue—Christian musicians in society

B. Codes (The number in brackets before the code refers to the colour number and classification above. A number in brackets after a code refers to another code number which is roughly equivalent to the code in question. **H** before the code refers to a hypothesis.)

(2) 1. Meaning of worship
(2) 2. When & where to worship
(2) 3. Importance of music in church
(6) 4. Christian attitude toward traditional music
(3) 5. Reasons for/against traditional instruments in church
(4) 6. Cultural posture toward music **(65)**
(2) 7. Christian musicians **(78)**
(7) 8. Traditional music in church
(2) 9. Origin of Christian songs
(2) 10. Attitude toward Christian songs **(32)**
(2) 11. Favourite church songs
(2) 12. Reasons for favourite church songs
(7) 13. Traditional instruments in the culture
(2) 14. Who plays church music?
(2) 15. Preferred instruments for church
(8) 16. Cultural song characteristics **(82, 90)**
(2) 17. Repertoire of church songs
(11) 18. Cultural music occasions
(10) 19. Characteristics of *jesere* music
(5) 20. Characteristics of *fooley* music
(13) **H** 21. Reasons for ambivalence to music
(10) 22. The role of the *jesere*

(9) 23. Traditional social structure
(10) 24. How one becomes a *jesere*
(10) 25. Kinds of *jesere* **(94)**
(10) 26. *Jesere* in the modern world **(46)**
(10) 27. Meaning of terms for musicians **(61)**
(10) 28. Place of *jesere* in society
(10) 29. Reputation of a *jesere* or musician
(10) 30. Value of traditional music and stories
(2) **H** 31. Reasons for lack of traditional music in church
(2) 32. Attitude to current church music **(10)**
(2) 33. Role of music in church
(2) 34. Attitude toward foreign instruments in church
(15) 35. Dancing
(7) 36. Who plays traditional instruments? **(57)**
(7) 37. Knowledge of traditional music
(17) 38. Reflective practice
(17) 39. Song-writing workshops
(4) 40. Music & identity
(4) 41. Heart music
(2) **H** 42. Big picture question
(12) **H** 43. Influence of Islam
(2) **H** 44. Theology of worship
(8) 45. What is indigenous music?
(16) 46. Role of musicians today **(26)**
(7) 47. Use of traditional instruments in culture **(49)**
(18) 48. Time
(7) 49. Different occasions for instruments **(47)**
(12) **H** 50. Islamic views of traditional music
(9) 51. Social behaviour
(9) **H** 52. Effects of social expectations on music
(4) 53. Disappearance of cultural music
(6) 54. Attitude toward traditional instruments in church
(7) 55. Differences between instruments
(8) 56. Musical terms
(7) 57. Who plays traditional music? **(36)**
(11) 58. Reasons for lack of funeral music
(18) 59. Change
(8) 60. Comparison with other cultures
(10) 61. Word origin & use **(27)**
(10) 62. Who can become a musician? **(84)**
(12) **H** 63. Islamic views of Christian music
(12) 64. Islamic debate about music
(4) 65. Cultural attitudes toward music **(6)**
(10) 66. How a musician builds a reputation
(2) 67. What is music?
(2) **H** 68. Words more important than music
(2) **H** 69. Few musicians amongst Christians
(2) **H** 70. Missionaries introduced songs
(2) **H** 71. Church is tiny
(2) **H** 72. Songhai more open to foreign music
(19) 73. Attractiveness of music
(2) 74. Purpose of Christian music
(2) 75. Evangelism with Christian music
(2) 76. Contextualization of music
(20) 77. Song-writing for cultural purposes
(20) 78. Knowledge of Christian musicians **(7)**

(20) 79. Christian musicians within the culture
(17) 80. Gender differences
(8) 81. Singing in culture **(105)**
(8) 82. Cultural music characteristics **(16, 90)**
(2) 83. Church instruments (actual)
(10) 84. Who can be a musician? **(62)**
(10) 85. *Jesere* in church
(6) 86. Different opinions about traditional music
(6) 87. Personal music preference
(2) 88. What is Christian music?
(17) 89. Feelings
(8) 90. Characteristics of traditional music **(16, 82)**
(7) 91. Characteristics of instruments
(5) 92. Instruments associated with spirits
(2) **H** 93. Association with spirit world
(10) 94. Kinds of musicians **(25)**
(2) **H** 95. New genre
(2) 96. *Louange et adoration*
(2) **H** 97. Multi-cultural churches
(2) **H** 98. Familiar songs
(2) **H** 99. Few Christian Zarma songs
(2) **H** 100. Urban environment
(2) **H** 101. Global youth culture
(11) 102. *Musique tradi-moderne*
(2) **H** 103. Western influence/ideal
(8) **H** 104. Music and society integrated
(8) 105. Who sings in culture? **(81)**
(8) 106. Traditional tunes
(7) 107. Distribution of instruments
(7) 108. Origin of instruments
(2) 109. Song language preference
(2) 110. Who sings in church?
(2) 111. Why do Christians sing?
(10) 112. Historical references
(9) **H** 113. Politics in Niger
(2) 114. Church music occasions
(12) 115. Islamic music
(7) 116. Availability of instruments
(7) 117. Use of modern instruments to play traditional tunes
(2) 118. Songhai churches in Mali
(7) 119. Mixing musics
(2) 120. Missionary views on traditional music
(5) 121. Reasons for *fooley*
(5) 122. Role of the *zima*
(5) 123. How one becomes a *zima*
(5) 124. Origin of the *fooley*
(2) 125. What is acceptable in church worship?
(2) **H** 126. Christians do not know traditional music-culture
(7) 127. Regional differences
(8) 128. Categories for instruments & musicians
(2) 129. Comparison between denominations
(2) 130. Song style preference
(2) 131. Appropriate worship songs for church
(2) 132. Reactions to songs
(2) 133. Putting new words to traditional tunes
(2) 134. Creation of new worship songs
(2) 135. Understanding of words

(2) **H** 136. Borrowed hymn tunes
(4) 137. Defensive reaction
(9) 138. Songhai language
(2) 139. New melodies for old words
(2) 140. Use of a book
(2) 141. Rural churches

C. Grouping of the hypotheses (**H**): Why do Songhai Christians neglect their musical traditions?

Traditional Subculture
52. Effects of social expectations on music
93. Association with spirit world
104. Music & society integrated
126. Christians do not know traditional music-culture

Protestant Church Subculture
44. Theology of Worship
69. Few musicians amongst Christians
71. Church is tiny
97. Multi-cultural churches
98. Familiar songs
99. Few Christian Zarma songs
100. Urban environment
136. Borrowed hymn tunes

Islamic Subculture
43. Influence of Islam
50. Islamic views of traditional music
63. Islamic views of Christian music

Nigerien Subculture
72. Songhai more open to foreign music
113. Politics in Niger

Western/Global Subculture
70. Missionaries introduced songs
95. New genre
101. Global youth culture
103. Western influence/ideal

Note: Number 68 is not included in these lists. I later realised that it is not a hypothesis and changed it to read: 'The importance of words'. Numbers 21, 31, and 42 are general categories that I used early in the coding process and later discarded when more specific themes and explanations started emerging.

Appendix Five: Case Study Reports

A. General Information for Case Studies

1. Case Study Protocol

Before I started the case studies, I established a case study protocol to guide me through the process. Since this was the first time I had conducted case studies, I relied heavily on secondary sources to guide me in writing up the protocol (Yin 2008; Eriksen 2004; Punch 2005:142–9; Rudestam & Newton 2007:49–53; King 2009). Because I was also learning as I went along, I found it necessary to make modifications to the protocol at various points during the research. Here is the modified version of the general protocol after several revisions and some experience doing it in three churches:

1. Research Question: Why do Songhai Protestants find it difficult to create their own indigenous forms of worship music, preferring instead to use borrowed forms of hymnody?

2. Objectives

   a. To study a few churches in depth, know the church communities better, get a feel for their song repertoires, and determine why they use certain kinds of music (Shuttleworth 2008:1–2);

   b. To test the theories and explanations coming out of the research data (see Section A3 of this case study report, 'Rival Answers/Explanations for My Research Question');

   c. To understand better the relationship between the music sung in Songhai/Zarma churches and that of the traditional music-culture;

   d. To triangulate with the interview and observation data and test its internal validity (Tellis 1997:7–8);

   e. To compare the research data with the existing literature on appropriate forms of Christian worship music.

3. Purposes of the Case Studies: Explanatory and Descriptive

4. Methods:

a. Participant observation of Sunday and other worship services over two months

b. Interviews with three key groups: youth, women, and elders

c. Analysis of the church hymnbook at the EBCG

5. Field Procedures

a. Selection of churches (see explanation for the selection of each church in the separate case study reports)

b. Ethical concerns

1) Meet with elder board and/or pastor to discuss my research proposal and gain permission to conduct the case study

2) Explain the research to the congregation

3) Get written consent of the elders/pastor to do the case study and use the church name and location in the thesis

4) Emphasize that, due to security concerns, individuals in the church will not be named but will be identified using a code

c. Sampling for focus group interviews

1) Frame: Groups in the church

2) Purposive: Interviewing specific groups in the church

3) Sample size: Based on size of groups

d. Schedule

1) Observations and recording of music during four or five Sunday worship services over a period of two months, at least three of which are on consecutive Sundays. Use of Worship Survey observation tool I created. At the EBCG, the case study took place between 17 November 2013 and 02 February 2014. The case study at the AGK church took place from 19

October to 09 November 2014, and I conducted the case study at the HCK between 15 February and 15 March 2015.

2) Attendance at one weekly prayer meeting to determine the type of music used during a service other than a Sunday. These observations took place on the following days: 11 December 2013 at the EBCG, 24 October 2014 and 18 March 2016 at the AGK, and 06 March 2015 at the HCK. In addition, I attended a Bible study at the HCK on 19 August 2015.

3) Focus group interviews with the three key demographic groups in the church during the period of the worship surveys using a questionnaire created for the case study (see Appendix Two E). At the EBCG and HCK churches, I interviewed the youth, the women, and the elders. Because the AGK is a small church, I interviewed the whole congregation together. I also separately interviewed the pastor and one woman at this church.

4) Information from the church hymnal at the EBCG to be placed on data tables and spreadsheets for further analysis.

5) Information about songs to be recorded on data tables and spreadsheets for further analysis (see the section on case study charts in the bibliography).

6. Coding and Analysis of Data

a. Open coding

1) Data transcription done manually (in hard copy) on site during the events and as soon as possible after the event written up on the computer while listening to recordings

2) Coding done after data transcription

3) Coding based on themes arising from my main research questions and the different theories/explanations for the use of borrowed songs in worship (see code sheet, Appendix Four).

b. Data Analysis

1) Comparing the data to my objectives, questions, and theories;

2) Looking at the main themes emerging which correspond to my research questions;

3) Starting with the main question and going to specific questions and themes;

4) Making tables and spreadsheets to analyse the hymnbook and to compare songs and styles of music used each week and at different meetings;

5) Comparing answers to questions across the three main demographic groups within each church to look for convergence and triangulate data;

6) Comparing answers to questions across the three case studies.

7. Checking validity

a. How to minimise biases

1) Desire to revive traditional music

--Here I have to keep in mind my bias informed by the academic literature on appropriate styles of music in different places and cultures.

--I must be willing to accept that some traditional Songhai music may not be appropriate for church at this point in time. This may lead to a loss or a radical transformation of traditional music, something that is happening in the culture itself.

--I need to listen carefully to what musicians and church leaders are saying about traditional music and its role in society and in the church.

2) Inability to see opposing viewpoints

--I have proposed over twenty possible rival explanations which answer my main question (see code sheet in Appendix Four)

--I will plan to have three neutral people read over the final manuscript of the thesis to check for bias.

--I will report my interpretations of the data to case study participants to see if what I am saying accurately reflects their viewpoints. I did this for the elders of the EBCG and HCK churches and for the congregation at the AGK church.

3) Assuming that participants are giving me responses to questions I am asking and not answers they think I want to hear

--Being alert to the participants who have opposing viewpoints;

--Paying attention to questions that provoke defensive reactions amongst participants;

--Checking the responses I get with other interviews I have conducted and seeking convergence of opinion;

--Since I am well-known in the culture and the church, people are more likely to give me truthful answers than if I were a total stranger who did not know their language;

--Use of the Songhai language as much as possible.

4) Improper translation of materials

--My research assistant will first do a draft translation into English of all interview material that I cite in the thesis.

--These translations will be checked by neutral people and by comparison with other data that participants have given me.

b. Limitations:

1) Technological Challenges (power cuts, computer glitches, car breakdowns)

--These need to be worked around as best as possible in Niger (in fact I had quite a number of them during the course of the case studies)

2) Availability of participants

--Things are often planned at the last minute in Niger and one has to learn to improvise. This may not always result in the best data, but it is authentic.

3) Preparation

--The case study at the EBCG was the first I had ever conducted.

--I was initially unsure how to go about it and learned as I went along. By the time I got to the case study at the HCK, I was feeling much more confident and sure of my questions and my goals.

--When I started the case study at the EBCG, I was very busy with my jobs at SIM and did not have the time I would have liked to prepare for the research. When I did the case study at the AGK, I was a bit less busy, but things got much busier when I did the case study at the HCK due to the riots of January 2015 and the personnel crunch at SIM.

4) Location

-- For security and travel restraints, I was unable to consider choosing any churches for the case study which were more than two hours outside Niamey.

-- I was able to get a slice of community life in three churches with very different characteristics.

5) Social

--All three of the churches I chose for case studies were multi-cultural. None of them reflected a purely Songhai/Zarma perspective.

--It is probably impossible to get a 'purely' Songhai or Zarma perspective, anyway, since most churches are in urban areas and many Songhai and Zarma are themselves of mixed ethnic origin and speak several languages.

8. Questionnaire for the focus group interviews (see Appendix Two E).

2. Further Explanation of Case Study Procedures

In this section, I will give a fuller explanation of how I conducted the case studies. I will not here explain my research methodology and the methods I used in the overall research. I have already done that in Chapter Four on research methodology. I will confine myself solely to the case studies.

The first step in doing the case studies was the selection of churches to study. I wanted to find churches which offered different perspectives on the question and were from different geographical areas. I looked at the churches where I had already done observations and chose three that seemed to have the most possibilities for bringing out a Songhai/Zarma perspective. To guide me in the choice, I made a table which showed the five characteristics I was looking for in churches: a significant number of Songhai or Zarma believers who attend the church, a Songhai pastor, singing in Songhai, preaching (or translation of the message) into Songhai, and a location outside Niamey. That chart can be accessed here: http://bit.ly/2mBTQWV. The only church that met all five of my criteria was in northern Benin, but it was too far away for me to consider a case study without leaving Niamey for four-five weeks. There were four churches which met four of the criteria: the AD-7, the CE-1, the EBCG, and the HCK. I only discovered the AD-7 at the end of my research in March of 2016, and it was too late to consider it for a case study. The CE-1 was located outside Niamey, but it is a tiny church composed mostly of children and young people with a pastor from Burkina Faso. As for the EBCG, I had known about it for many years, and it seemed like a suitable fit for a case study because it had a fairly large number of Zarma people. After I had completed the EBCG church, I struggled to find other churches that fit the criteria I wanted. The second church was the hardest to choose. I wanted a smaller church with a Pentecostal/charismatic theology, but so many of these churches used little Songhai in their services even though they all translated the message into a Songhai dialect. The only one that met three of the criteria

I was looking for was the AGK. The third church, the HCK, was a church that I had not known about before and only discovered late in 2014. It seemed like the best church to meet the criteria of a location outside Niamey, and it became the final case study.

The next step in the process was to consult with the pastor and/or elders to present my proposal for research and ask for their permission to conduct the case study. With time all agreed to let me conduct the study in their church. I presented my research project to the different congregations on the Sunday preceding the beginning of the case study, and I received signed written permission to conduct the case study and use the church's name and location in the thesis from the leadership.

Third, I proceeded with worship service observations. I did the same thing I had done in my initial worship observation, but this time, I was going more in depth and using as many ears and eyes to help me as possible. I also did more in-depth analysis of these churches than the other ones where I only did one initial observation. I also wrote up a separate report of each case study (see sections B, C, and D which follow).

While I was doing church observations, I also conducted focus group interviews with various demographic groups in the EBCG and HCK: women, youth, and elders. Because of the small size of the AGK, I interviewed the entire congregation on 19 July 2015 after the case study was completed and I could give them a preliminary report of my findings. The purpose of the interviews was to have some real interaction with important demographic groups in the church and confirm or refute hypotheses that I had formed during previous phases of the research. I also wanted to test my interpretation of the data I had collected from other sources. Finally, I was looking for a convergence of evidence regarding the reasons for the seeming preference for borrowed songs in the church (Yin 2008:56).

The questionnaire for these interviews was modified from the general questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire is in Appendix Two

E. I found that with the groups I could not go into as much depth as I could with individuals, so these interviews tended to be shorter and have briefer responses to my questions. Also, with the youth and women, several people seemed to speak more often than others. The interviews were difficult to transcribe as there were overlapping sounds and voices which intruded into the recordings, and some of the responses were difficult to hear because of the distance between the recorder and the speaker. My research assistants took the microphone and placed it near the speakers, but the first parts of some responses were weak and difficult to hear.

I will not go into any more detail about the interviews except to comment on the songs I used. In the first part of the interviews, I played excerpts of three songs mentioned in the case study questionnaire (Appendix Two E) and Chapter Six, Section 4.3. I wanted to test their appeal and suitability for worship. I chose songs in different styles to see if certain styles were more acceptable than the others. I struggled to come up with songs that would give me a real idea of what Songhai Christians liked. The first song I chose was a French version of 'Abba, Father', written by David Bilbrough in 1977, sung slowly in four-part harmony without instrumentation. I had thought this song would be known by most Christians in Niger as I have heard it sung on numerous occasions. I was hoping to verify if the style of the singing and the lack of accompaniment were acceptable. To my surprise, I discovered that not only was the song not known, but the participants did not recognize that there was no musical accompaniment other than vocal harmony. I was not surprised, however, to find out that they did not enjoy the style of singing. The second, written by Paul Baloche in 2013, is entitled 'Voici le Jour' ('This is the Day'). It is more up tempo and includes a variety of electronic instruments as well as the drum kit. The young people seemed to enjoy the style of singing, and other groups said it was okay, but the musical accompaniment drowned out the words and made it hard for people to understand and adapt the song to

a Nigerien context. The final song was in Zarma and is entitled ‘Wa Naanay’ (‘Trust’). It was written in 1994 by a Nigerien Christian in a traditional style that uses a *jembe* and a guitar as accompaniment. The guitar, however, is tuned differently to better accommodate a pentatonic scale, and the instrument is played more like a *moolo*. Unsurprisingly, all the groups liked the song. It is quite well known throughout Niger, and many people were singing along. It garnered a much more positive response than either of the other two songs.

In addition to the observations and the focus group interviews, I took a good look at the Zarma songbook, *Zarma Baytu Tira*, which is used by the EBCG and several other churches in this research. The songs in the hymnbook are exclusively in Zarma. Two of the appendices in the book helped me immensely. One listed the song authors/translators. The other listed the suggested tunes to be used with each song. Most of the tunes come from North America since missionaries translated many of the songs. There are a few Hausa tunes and several are of unknown origin, but only two of the 151 songs are listed as being of Zarma origin. For the most part, the translated lyrics of the songs from the West follow closely their French or English counterparts.

When I had completed each observation or interview, I transcribed all the data into my computer and coded the interviews using the code sheet in Appendix Four. Then I made charts and spreadsheets listing all the songs in each church and each service. I compared the number of songs sung across congregations, and looked at the questions of song origins, song frequencies, and song languages. Finally, I wrote up a report on each church. I subsequently made a follow-up visit to each one and read back to them the report for their feedback and suggestions. The report to the EBCG and the HCK were presented to the elders of those churches while the report for the AGK was read to the entire congregation. The final reports on each (Sections B, C, D) incorporate the changes they suggested. The data was merged with other research data.

3. Rival Answers/Explanations for my Research Question

For the first case study at the EBCG church, I wanted to test seven rival research explanations for validity. Each explanation reflected a preliminary level of coding that I had reached in the early phases of research through observations and semi-structured interviews. These seven seemed to be the most prominent and the most common explanations for the tendency to use borrowed songs in worship. I divided the seven explanations into two categories as follows (the number following the explanation refers to the code on the code sheet in Appendix Four):

1) Primary Explanations

1. The tune of a song is not as important as the lyrics (#68);
2. The stratification of Songhai society (#52);
3. There are few Christians with musical ability or knowledge (#69);
4. The missionaries imposed their songs on the Songhai church (#70);

2) Secondary Explanations

5. The small number of Christians amongst the Songhai (#71);
6. Pressure from Islam—people are afraid to use their own traditions (#43);
7. The Songhai were more open to Western ways of doing things and put up less resistance to the colonizers (#72).

After completing the case study at the EBCG, I realised that the importance of words in songs was something bigger than simply an explanation for the lack of indigenous tunes, and I dropped it from the list but integrated it more into the overall research as part of an organizing principle of worship amongst the Songhai. I had added more codes to my code sheet by then and realised there was another primary research explanation: liturgical worship in the culture is spirit worship (#93). Other explanatory codes I had used before or later added to the list seemed to come to prominence and group themselves with the explanations in my original list, as follows:

1) Primary

1. The stratification of Songhai society

#52. Effects of social expectations on music

#104. Music & society integrated

2. There are few Christians with musical ability or knowledge

#69. Few musicians amongst Christians

#126. Christians do not know the traditional music-culture

3. The missionaries imposed their songs on the Songhai church

#70. Missionaries introduced songs

#44. Theology of Worship

#95. New genre

#98. Familiar songs

#99. Few Christian Zarma songs

#100. Urban environment

#101. Global youth culture

#103. Western influence/ideal

#136. Borrowed hymn tunes

4. There is an association with the spirit world

#93. Association with spirit world

2) Secondary

5. The small number of Christians amongst the Songhai

#71. Church is tiny

#97. Multi-cultural churches

#98. Familiar songs

6. Pressure from Islam—people are afraid to use their own traditions

#43. Influence of Islam

#50. Islamic views of traditional music

#63. Islamic views of Christian music

7. The Songhai were more open to Western ways of doing things and put up less resistance to the colonizers.

#72. Songhai more open to foreign music

#113. Politics in Niger

After I completed the case studies and compared them with other data, I had a third look at the overall research and regrouped the explanations under the five headings which correspond to the five historical and cultural influences I have mentioned in the thesis (Chapter Four, Section 6 and Chapter Seven, Sections 2 & 3): the traditional music culture (#52, #69, #93, #104, #126), the Protestant church subculture (#44, #71, #97, #99, #100, #136), Islam (#43, #50, #63), the Nigerien national/political culture (#72, #113), and the Western/global subculture (#70, #95, #101, #103). I grouped #98 (familiar words) with #68 (the importance of song lyrics) and dropped them off the list as possible explanations. Finally, I grouped all five explanations together under the rubric of identity formation. Each explanation or cultural influence exerts a force on the formation of Songhai and Christian identities, and each puts believers under dynamic pressure as it changes.

4. Informed Consent Form for Churches Participating in a Case Study

My name is John DeValve. I was born in Galatia (now Turkey) in 1959. I am American by nationality, but I have spent more than half of my life living outside the United States. I received my bachelor's degree in mathematics and Bible in 1981. I also studied French in university. I received a master's degree from Columbia International University (South Carolina, USA) in 1997 in intercultural studies with a concentration in Islamic studies.

I have been a musician since my childhood, and I play both piano and guitar today. Music is not my primary vocation, but it is a secondary vocation for me, and it has had a great influence on my life.

I first came to Niger in 1984. I worked first in Maradi and then after my marriage, in Niamey. My wife, Nancy, and I were married in 1986. For sixteen years (1992-2008), my family and I, including our two children, lived in Téra, where we worked in evangelism and discipleship amongst the Songhai and the Gurmancé.

During my time in Niger, several questions have come to my mind. I am naturally curious and want to understand the world God created to better understand God himself. One question that has preoccupied me concerns music. We all have several identities, including:

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Nationality

Language

Christian – the identity that unites us

How do we express these identities in the music that we use in our churches and our Christian celebrations? That is the question I am looking at in my research. Here are some other questions related to the main one:

1. How do we express our identity in Christ, especially with music?

2. How can we best express this Christian identity in our context given our other identities?

3. What is the role of music in the church?

4. What role is there for traditional music in the modern world, especially in the church?

5. How should a Christian who comes from within the Songhai/Zarma community express himself or herself in worship?

6. Does traditional Songhai/Zarma music have a role to play in our worship and in our songs?

7. Is the music which comes from outside going to dominate our worship or do we have something to contribute to the global church in this area?

8. How should we express our worship in a form that satisfies us but is also uniquely Christian?

9. How can we create new songs which come from within our community and which express our unique identity with its different facets?

10. What music would be most acceptable to testify of our faith in Christ to those who use the Songhai language?

11. How do our multiple identities express themselves in a large city like Niamey where ethnicities, languages, and nationalities are mixed?

12. How can the music we use in church contribute to reinforce our local and global identities at the same time?

My research is a general study of traditional music in the Songhai/Zarma culture with a specific application to the community of believers. I want people in the world to

know about the Songhai/Zarma culture and to hear the voice of these peoples, but I also want to explore with believers our identity in depth, especially with respect to music.

I am studying for a PhD at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) in England. I want to analyse what you tell me in interviews and use your words in my thesis. Excerpts from your stories, your words, and your ideas may appear in written publication with the stories, words, and ideas of others. I also want to publish the results of observations I have made during worship services.

I would like to use the name and location of your church in my thesis, but the identity of individuals and members of the church will be considered as private and confidential. The names, addresses, and any other information which would indicate the identity of any person will be removed or changed so that what you contribute will appear as though it came from an anonymous source. The identity of anyone that you mention in the interviews will be protected in the same way.

I will keep all data collected on my computer and backup drives. My wife, my research assistant, and I have all agreed to keep the names of research participants confidential. They will be the only people to see and hear the recordings and transcriptions of the interviews.

Thank you for your participation in this research. I appreciate you willingness to help me in this project. I hope this study will contribute to the growth of the church in Niger and the edification of all disciples of Jesus. After my final *viva*, I plan to write a summary of the results in French to hand out to the churches.

To make your participation in this research official, could the members of the church board please sign the following form? By signing, you indicate that you have read and understood the conditions of your participation in the research and that you are in agreement with the terms of participation. You may keep a copy of this form and give me the other copy. Thank you very much.

AUTHORIZATION TO USE THE NAME OF A CHURCH IN RESEARCH

We, the members of the board of the (EBCG) (ACK) (HCK), having read and understood the nature of the research in question being done by John R DeValve, do hereby give our consent to participation in said research. We agree to allow the name and characteristics of the church to appear in his doctoral thesis. We understand that no member of the church will be mentioned by name in the thesis.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send a copy of the research results to the church:

Name: _____

Address: _____

John R DeValve

SIM, BP 10065

8000 Niamey, NIGER

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99-97-71-75

B. Case Study Report for the Evangelical Baptist Church of Goudel (EBCG)

1. Descriptive Data about the First Case Study

1.1 The Church

The Evangelical Baptist Church of Goudel (EBCG) was founded by missionaries associated with the now-defunct Evangelical Baptist Mission (EBM). The church is part of the Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Niger (UEEBN), an association of mainly Zarma and Gurmancé churches founded shortly after Independence in 1960. The church has 60-70 members and adherents, most of them Nigerien, with about 25 per cent coming from the Zarma ethnic subgroup (according to my informal survey of the church young people, elders, and women). The church is run by a board of elders and does not have a salaried pastor.

1.2 Location

The church is located in the Goudel neighbourhood of Niamey, the capital of Niger, which had a population in 2011 of over 1 million (Niger Government 2014:4). The church sits on a hill overlooking the Niger River. At one point the church grounds were located outside the city on a large tract of land donated by the Niger government. Today the village of which it was a part has been swallowed up by the rapidly-expanding city (Washer & Gray 2007:59).

1.3 Physical Characteristics of the Church

Rectangular in shape, the EBCG has cement floors and walls and a sloped tin roof. One enters the church through a corridor at the side. The sanctuary is to the left while two auxiliary rooms are to the right. In the sanctuary, there are two rows of six wooden benches about three metres in length on each side of a central aisle. The row on the left as one faces the front is the women's row, and the one on the right is the men's.

In the front of the church sits a slightly raised platform upon which stand two podiums. One is for the song leader and preacher, the other is for the translator. On stage left facing the congregation are some armchairs destined as seating for the elders and the speaker of the day.

1.4 Church Services

The Sunday morning service at the EBCG commences around 9 a.m. The first half hour includes an invocation, songs, prayers, announcements, and testimony (see photo B-1). By 9:30, most of the members have arrived, and the second half hour is devoted to singing, especially by groups such as the women and youth. There is also a Scripture reading and an offering. The preaching (with translation) takes up most of the second hour. The service normally ends shortly after 11 a.m. with a closing song and prayer.

Photo B-1: EBCG Congregation

Credit: Nancy DeValve

The EBCG is one of the few churches I have attended in Niamey where the Zarma dialect of Songhai takes priority over other languages. All announcements, Scripture readings, liturgical instructions, and the message are either in Zarma or translated into Zarma. Normally there is a French translation of everything said in Zarma, but many of the songs are sung exclusively in Zarma**.**

1.5 Criteria for Selecting the Goudel Church

I chose the EBCG as a case study subject for the following reasons. First, I wanted a church that represented the ‘older’, more traditional, mission-founded congregations.

Second, I was looking for a church that had a largely non-Pentecostal style and theology. Finally, I chose a church that uses the Songhai language in preaching, prayer, and singing and where a significant proportion of the members (25 per cent plus) identify with the Songhai/Zarma.

2. Case Study Procedure

Before conducting the case study, I attended the Sunday morning service at the EBCG on 15 Sept 2013 and arranged to meet with the elders. On 29 Sept, I attended the elders meeting and explained the nature and extent of my research, asking for permission to study the church and its worship practices. Their reply took over a month to get to me, but by early November, I had received their consent to conduct the research. On the tenth of November, the elders asked me to present my research proposal to the congregation during the morning service, and the following Sunday (17 Nov) I began the case study.

The case study involved three overlapping phases. First, I conducted five worship surveys of Sunday morning services on 17 November 2013; 01, 08, and 15 December 2013; and 26 January 2014. I also attended the Wednesday evening prayer meeting on 11 Dec 2013 to determine what types of music are used outside the Sunday morning service.

The purpose of these worship surveys was five-fold: 1) To determine the style and origin of the songs being sung by the congregation and special groups; 2) To observe what musical instruments were used to accompany songs; 3) To see who the musicians were in the church; 4) To obtain a large sample of the total repertoire of songs used by the church; 5) To obtain as much information about the church and its history as possible through observation and questions, both formal and informal.

I recorded each service except for the message to be able to check observations later and have a record of what I had heard. On three occasions, I also had assistants

observing the service with me. My research assistant, Abdias Alassane, helped me with observations on 01 and 08 Dec 2013 and on 26 Jan 2014. My wife Nancy also observed the worship service on 08 Dec 2013 and on 26 Jan 2014 and took photos of the service on 15 Dec 2013. This tactic allowed me to have a second pair of eyes and ears to catch things I may have missed and reduce bias on my part. For these observations, I used the worship survey form that I had developed during the observation phase of research as a guide.

The second part of the case study involved focus group interviews with three key groups in the church: the women (01 Dec 2013), the youth (08 Dec 2013), and the elders (02 Feb 2014). There was also a follow-up meeting with the elders on 29 Nov 2015). For each of these groups I asked the same series of questions (see Appendix Two E).

In the first part of the interviews, I played excerpts of three songs mentioned in section A2 of the case study appendix (Appendix Five). In the second part of the focus group interviews, I asked questions about the church's musical practice and why different styles of singing and accompaniment were acceptable to believers and others were not. The interview with the women and the elders was conducted in Zarma and the interview with the youth in French. I recorded each interview and later transcribed each one with my research assistant. Then I coded the interviews to my research questions and rival explanations to begin the process of analysis.

The final part of the case study was the examination of the church hymnal, *Zarma Baytu Tira* (AA et al. 1994). There are 151 hymns in the book, all in Zarma. In the back of the hymnal are several indexes. The first is an alphabetical index of songs (in Zarma) and the second is a topical index of songs. The third and fourth list the translators for each of the songs in the book and the suggested tune to which each song could be sung. I made great use of the latter two indexes in the analysis of this case study.

3. Problems Encountered

From the beginning of the case study, things seemed to go awry. I encountered multiple and varied sets of difficulties over which I had little control. These forced me to improvise and modify the case study at several points.

The first problem I had was dealing with changes that had occurred in the church since my initial observation of the church on 29 January 2012. In August of 2012, the long-serving pastor of the church had died suddenly. In 2013, the church was in transition, being run by a board of elders and still trying to find its feet. Because of this, the church seemed a bit unsure about letting me conduct the research even though the previous pastor had readily endorsed my research program. I was also new at this and did not try to push too hard to get my foot in the door.

The next problem I encountered was the timetable. There were many delays in getting started. I had envisioned finishing the case study by the end of November 2013, but it took time to get a response from the elders of the church and get the questionnaires written up. I was not able to start until the end of November. I had to learn patience and not be too concerned about my timetable. Schedule changes are something I frequently encounter in Niger, and I have come to expect them and try to build a place in my life for them.

A third difficulty I encountered was a series of technical breakdowns. On 18 December, I had a computer fault which affected all my software and some of my research data. Then, on 22 December, on the way to church to conduct the last planned worship survey, our car broke down in the middle of a busy roundabout, and I was not able to get to church. I had to delay the final survey until 26 January 2014, and I could not interview the elders until 02 February 2014. These breakdowns were extremely frustrating, but as I was under tremendous pressure at the time, I decided that I needed to step back from the research and go a little more slowly.

Another difficulty encountered was last-minute scheduling changes. I had planned to interview the youth on 01 December 2014, but one of the elders informed me that day that I would be interviewing the women instead. My research assistant and I had not yet finalized the translation of the questionnaire in Zarma, but I needed to do the interview in Zarma. I only had a French copy of the questionnaire with me, and I made several mistakes translating the interview questions on the spot.

The conditions under which I conducted the interviews were never ideal. The youth focus group interview on 08 December 2013 was almost drowned out by noises from an adjacent room. The responses came out fairly well on the recording, however, because my wife held the microphone up close to the speakers. Another issue that came up was that most of the youth seemed very taciturn and unresponsive. This is a very common problem with focus groups, as I found out by experience. Two young people (one young man and one young lady) answered most of the questions.

For the women's interview, I was in the sanctuary of the church, and my tiny speakers did not carry well throughout the space when I played the three songs that I wanted them to listen to. They were all straining to hear. It was also hard to capture all the voices on the recording, and I had to rely on my field notes for some of the responses to my questions.

The interview with the elders occurred after a long morning service and felt rushed. I was not able to complete all the questions and could not find a plug for my speakers. I had to do a follow-up interview with the elders at a much later date – 29 Nov 2015 – (Elders-B 2015) in order to play the three songs for them and get their reactions.

4. Analysis of the Worship Songs at the EBCG Church

4.1 Indigenous elements in singing

During the observations of worship services, I noticed that while most of the songs were borrowed from foreign sources, the church added local and indigenous elements common to many African cultures (Merriam 1959b; Stone 2004:64; Baker 2012:29–39). I will mention three. The first is a rhythm. Few churches in Niger are without a membranophone or an idiophone even when no melody instruments are present (Nketia 1974:125). During the period of the case study, I saw one membranophone and two idiophones used. The membranophone was a set of two tapered, single-head drums which sat in a stand on the floor (see photo B-2). Generally, one person played both drums at the same time, hitting one with the left hand and the other with the right. According to the elders, the drum was borrowed from Burkina Faso (Elders-A 2014, 4:13-5:05). The idiophones were a tambourine and a set of sticks.

Photo B-2: Tapered Drum at EBCG

Credit: Nancy DeValve

A second element that made the singing feel more 'African' was call/response. While most of the songs had a verse/chorus or simple chorus structure, some used the technique where a cantor calls out a line and the congregation responds with a repeated refrain. One song of Hausa origin seemed well-liked by the congregation and was sung on two Sundays. The title of this song translates to, 'Ladies, Are You Tired? Not Even a Little'. The phrase, 'Not even a little' constituted the response to the cantor's sung question. Each succeeding verse asks the same question of different groups (men, children, preachers, young

ladies, young men), and a refrain, sung by all, followed each verse. An excerpt of the song can be heard here: http://bit.ly/2mayeoy.

A third indigenous element in the songs was movement. While many Songhai/Zarma people are reluctant to dance, they often raise their hands, clap, sway in place, or do a two-step shuffle from side to side. This was most evident when the youth and women's groups sang their special numbers, but members of the congregation also moved their bodies or clapped at times.

4.2 Data about songs in the EBCG church

In the six services I attended during the case study (five Sunday mornings and one Wednesday evening), my research helpers and I counted a total of one hundred and seven songs. Of these, seventy-eight songs were distinct. Fifty-eight were sung once during the course of the study and 20 were repeated at least once. One song was sung a total of seven times. It is entitled 'A Soldier, a Soldier, a Soldier' (the link is here: http://bit.ly/2n6bvt9) and was one of only two songs that were sung all five of the Sundays I observed the service. According to the indexes at the back of the hymnal, it was written by a missionary, but the tune origin is unknown. It seems to be well-liked, however, and is short and catchy. It was used by both the congregation and groups of singers.

Of the 107 songs, 57 were from the hymnal while the remaining 50 were sung from memory. There was an average of 21 songs each Sunday. This may seem like a large number, but it is quite common in Nigerien churches, and it shows the importance of singing in African Christian life.

When I looked at the languages in which the songs were sung, I found that 57 of the 107 songs were sung exclusively in Zarma (53.3 per cent of the total) while 42 songs (39.3 per cent) were exclusively in French. The remaining eight songs (8.7 per cent) were sung in multiple languages. This data is summarized in the following table:

Language	Total Songs	Congregation	Percent of Total	Groups	Percent of Total	Group Name
Zarma (Z)	57	46	81%	11	19%	Ladies—9 Youth—2
French (F)	42	22	52%	20	48%	Youth—14 Men—6
Z + F	3	2	67%	1	33%	Youth
Z + F + Hausa (H)	3	2	67%	1	33%	Youth
F + H	1	0	0%	1	100%	Ladies
Z + F + H + Eng.	1	1	100%	0	0%	---
Totals	107	73	68%	34	32%	

Table B-1: Song Languages at the EBCG: Six Services – Nov 2013-Jan 2014

The above table shows that the congregation sang more than four-fifths of the Zarma songs but only just over half the French songs. The ladies group favoured the use of Zarma songs while the youth group and the men's duet sang almost exclusively in French. The focus group interviews confirmed that the ladies prefer to sing in Zarma while the elders and the youth said that either Zarma or French is acceptable to them.

When it comes to the origins of song tunes, the picture is a bit less clear. The following table shows the song origins of the 78 unique songs used during the case study:

	Western	Zarma	Hausa	African	Unknown
Totals	39	3	2	10	24

Table B-2: Song Tune Origins at the EBCG: Six Services – Nov 2013-Jan2014

While the number of tunes for which I did not know the origin is high, only six of these tunes were in Zarma. Of these six tunes, I knew a French version of one song and the youth sang a second one. A third song was the one mentioned above ('A Soldier …'), written by a missionary. The other three Zarma tunes were unknown to me. Eighteen songs with an unknown origin were sung in French. These are more likely to be of

foreign origin, especially since eleven of them were sung exclusively by the young people and three were sung exclusively by the men's duet, leaving only three congregational songs in French for which I could not identify the origin.

This data shows that foreign tunes are sung much more often than locally-created ones. In fact, only three tunes (4 per cent of the total) with another possible three Zarma songs can definitely be attributed to local sources. The overwhelming majority of songs have been composed outside the Songhai/Zarma community. It is interesting to note, however, that two of the three locally-created Zarma songs were composed by members of this congregation.

4.3 The choice of songs sung at the EBCG

Everyone in the focus group interviews agreed that singing is essential to Christian worship. This is not surprising given the history of the church and the cultural milieu of Africa. One young lady in the youth interview stated that 'The angels sang before us; therefore, we must also sing.' (Youth 2013, #V-C) One of the older ladies said the service would be slow and boring without singing (Women 2013, #V-C).

The reactions to the three songs I played for the groups did indicate a moderate preference for more traditional styles of singing, especially amongst the ladies and the elders. The ladies said that some older folks might not like the second song ('Voici le Jour'), and the youth, much to my surprise, could not identify the words to the first song ('Abba, Père'), saying that the music overpowered the words (Women 2013, #I-B-2; Youth 2013, #I-A-3). Judging by body language, people preferred the third song without question ('Wa Naanay'). They knew the song, were singing along with it, and were nodding their heads as they listened. The reactions of the elders to the first two songs were fairly negative. They did not really like 'Abba Père' because it was slow, Western, and inappropriate for the context (2015, #I-A). As for 'Voici le Jour', they said it is very Western and 'worldly', and the rhythm drowned out the words. One elder said,

‘It makes me want to dance with a twelve-year old girl.’ (2015, #I-B) This exercise showed that style and words are important, but none of the songs was completely rejected as being inappropriate for worship.

5. The Case Study and Five Research Explanations

5.1 The lyrics are more important than the tune

Is it true that the origin of the tune is not as important to the believers as the actual words? There is evidence to suggest that this might be the case. Both the youth and the women immediately stated that the words are more important than the tune. The elders presented a more nuanced perspective. One elder stated that both the tune and the lyrics can glorify God and that playing a drum can be an expression of worship (Elders-A 2014, 21:52-22:06). At the same time, he talked about the importance of the words and how they can encourage and exhort people to live a certain way. This information seems to verify other data coming from the semi-structured interviews. Many of my participants, when asked to choose a favourite church song, chose one that was borrowed from outside Niger and affirmed that the words had a powerful effect on them (AB 2013, 1:07:10-1:10:49; GS 2012, 32:30-33:35; MB1 2012, 11:11-12:47). At several points during my observations, I looked around at people in the congregation and watched how they sang various songs. On 01 December 2013, for example, the congregation sang a Zarma version of ‘Just As I Am’ as the closing song. Even though the song was sung slowly and the words did not seem to fit the tune well, people around me expressed deep emotion as they sang and genuinely enjoyed the song. The song leader had his eyes closed, hands up, brow furrowed and head raised. He was singing the song with gusto and feeling. People around me likewise had their hands raised and sang with force and volume. Many sang the song from memory.

5.2 The stratification of Songhai society

Has the past social structure of Songhai society prevented the church from creating its own worship music? Secondary and primary sources outside this case study suggest that this is the case (Hale 1998:143–5, 190–92; MB1 2012, 29:03-30:25; TB-B 2013, 19:40-20:49, 43:12-43:38), but there is no evidence to support this theory in this case study. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case. The social barriers which exist in the society have, at least in part, broken down in the church. Anyone in the church who has the ability and a good reputation is welcome to compose music. For example, on 08 December 2013, the women's group sang a song from the hymnal which did not use the suggested tune in the index. Later, I discovered that one of the women had composed the tune. The conflicting evidence on this indicates that this explanation still needs further investigation.

5.3 A lack of competent Christian musicians

There are no grounds to support this explanation in the EBCG church. While all the groups in the church acknowledged that few songs sung in the church and few in the hymnal are created by people from the local Christian community, they protested that there are some songs created by Songhai/Zarma believers (Women 2013, #III-B). Furthermore, I was surprised to discover six people in the church, three men and three women, who have proven music-creation capabilities. One of the elders has taken song tunes from the culture and transformed them into songs for Christian worship by writing new words for them (Elders-A 2014, 22:06-24:54).

5.4 Missionaries introduced their songs into the church

This explanation seems to have some merit. As is the case in much of Africa, missionaries introduced their own songs into Nigerien churches seemingly with little regard for cultural traditions. Without any prompting, the elders of the EBCG church related to me how the early Baptist missionaries brought their pianos and organs to

Niger and translated their song tunes into Zarma (Elders-A 2014, 10:15-11:06, 28:51-30:43). The songs they currently sing come largely from those early missionaries. One reason the Songhai/Zarma Christians prefer borrowed music in church is because of the action of the missionaries; however, making this the only reason or even the main reason is too simplistic. For one thing, the believers showed no animosity to the missionaries and did not impute any ulterior motives to their actions. For another, one has to remember that the early missionaries were dealing with a very stratified society where people did not sing or dance in worship except in the context of the traditional spirit rites (BK2 2013, 33:08-33:43). Furthermore, Christian worship music was a completely new genre for the Songhai (Garba 1992:149–53). Finally, these churches have been running their own affairs for more than fifty years. In that time, the world has changed drastically, and many African Christians in other cultures have begun to compose their own worship music. Yet the Songhai/Zarma churches have remained content with borrowed tunes and translated lyrics.

5.5 Pressure from Islam

Does the criticism of cultural traditions from Islam hold the church back from creating indigenous worship music? Some comments from participants in semi-structured interviews would suggest this is the case (AB 2013, 18:24-19:26; GZ 2013, #V). It is true that some Muslims eschew music, as evidenced by the ban on music and musical instruments by the Islamists who seized control of northern Mali in 2012 (Raghavan 2012). All three groups in the EBCG church acknowledged that both traditional and Christian forms of music receive a good deal of criticism from Muslim leaders. West Africans in general, however, recoiled in horror at the rigid interpretation of Islam imposed on northern Mali. During a concert by the popular band Mamar Kassey in Niamey on 12 October 2013, the lead singer publicly thanked the French for their intervention to drive out the Islamists and help preserve the African way of life.

Moreover, in the 1990s and 2000s, some Muslims in West Africa started borrowing traditional forms of music to create their own musical genres for liturgical settings (McLaughlin 1997). The women and the elders at the EBCG mentioned this phenomenon, especially in Nigeria (Women 2013, #III-D; Elders-A 2014, 16:13-17:40). It seems that this explanation does not have much validity in answering my main question, but I will need to do further research on it.

6. The Relationship between the EBCG and the Traditional Music-Culture

While many worship songs at the EBCG church have little connection to the traditional musical culture of the Songhai, it is not true that there is no interest in traditional worship styles or the use of traditional instruments. One woman stated that formerly no traditional instruments were considered acceptable for church use, but times have changed (MI in Women 2013, #II-E). Another woman said that any traditional instrument could be used in church if it was played to glorify God (HA2 in Women 2013, #II-E). Most participants in the group interviews were reluctant to allow the monochord violin and the calabash, instruments used in the *fooley*, but other instruments were considered acceptable. In fact, all three groups mentioned that the church once used the double-headed pressure drum called the *dondon*.

The elders were even more direct in their answer. They want the church to remember where it came from. They commented that many young people in Niger are disconnected from their cultural traditions and prefer electronic instruments and the drum kit. While not opposed to borrowing music from other cultures, the elders do not want the church to forget its roots and throw out Songhai history and traditions (Elders-A 2014, 12:54-13:12). One elder said, ‘The current position of the church is that we should return to the traditional instruments that are acceptable and … play them to the glory of God.’ (My translation) (PA in Elders-A 2014, 11:06-11:56)

7. Conclusion

I have chosen to use case studies as one approach to this research. The case study is useful when one is asking a 'why' question which requires an explanation. It is also helpful when the researcher is studying a phenomenon over which he or she has little control. Both of these conditions are true of this research (Yin 2008:2, 8).

A cursory observation of church services at the EBCG indicates that the worship songs used there have little apparent connection to the musical traditions of the Songhai/Zarma people. This observation is reinforced by an analysis of song languages and tune origins. A deeper look at the church and the attitudes of its members, however, reveals that this church is more connected to its traditional roots than one might have expected. The attitude toward traditional instruments is generally favourable and at least two traditional instruments were used in the past. In addition, while most of the song tunes are noticeably of foreign origin, a few are written by local Christians.

Of the five explanations that I have proposed to answer my main research questions, two find substantial support in this case study: 1) the song lyrics are more important than the tune, and 2) the missionaries introduced their songs to the church without much regard for the culture. In addition, all the focus group interviews also seemed to lend tangential support to the pressure from Islam as a factor in the preference for borrowed songs. These three theories need further investigation and probing. While the stratification of society is a major explanation and garners much attention in both secondary sources and my semi-structured interviews, there is no evidence in this case study to support it.

This case study has irrefutably disproven at least two major points related to the third explanation. First, there is no lack of competent and talented Christian musicians amongst the Songhai/Zarma. In addition to the six in this church, I have also met and interviewed four others who are equally talented (TB-B 2013; HK 2013; IH 2014; AB

2013). Many of these musicians are not aware of each other, however. Second, it is not true to say that Songhai/Zarma Christians do not have a desire to develop more of their own indigenous worship music. These are major discoveries for me and challenge my original assumptions. Because of data collected in observations and semi-structured interviews, I do not believe they undermine my research question, but I will need to modify my assumptions and look carefully at the practice of worship in the two remaining case studies.

C. Case Study Report for the Assemblies of God Kombo (AGK)

Please refer to the following link to read the AGK Case Study Report: http://bit.ly/2nTKutS.

D. Case Study Report for the Hosanna Church of Kollo (HCK)

Please refer to the following link to read the HCK Case Study Report: http://bit.ly/2nhXNRC.

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Worship Service-4 2014 (09 Nov)

2. EBCG

Prayer Meeting 2013 (11 Dec)

Worship Service-1 2013 (17 Nov)

Worship Service-2 2013b (01 Dec)

Worship Service-3 2013c (08 Dec)

Worship Service-4 2013d (15 Dec)

Worship Service-5 2014 (26 Jan)

3. HCK

Bible Study 2015 (19 Aug)

Prayer Meeting 2015 (06 Mar)

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‘Wa Naanay’

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